

**DIGITAL MARKETING AND THE GROWTH OF MACRO BUSINESSES IN BENIN
CITY**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MARKETING,
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IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE (B.Sc.) DEGREE IN MARKETING**

MAY, 2024

DECLARATION

I declare that:

This project work is based on a study carried out by me in the Department of Marketing, University of Benin under the supervision of Dr Samuel J. Osifo. All ideas and views are product of my personal research, effort and all references to works of others have been duly acknowledged.

Ruth Olaitan JUBRIL

Project Researcher

Date

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work titled “**Digital Marketing and the Growth of Macro Businesses in Benin City**” **Marketing Information System and New Product Development in Nigeria**” was carried out and submitted by **Ruth Olaitan JUBRIL** with the Matriculation Number **MGS1908409** for the award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) degree in the Department of Marketing, University of Benin, Benin City.

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Date

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate my research work to God Almighty, my loving parents whose continuous Efforts, support and encouragement made it possible for me to do this work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I want to express my gratitude to God Almighty for supporting me during all of the challenges and tribulations I have faced. It is only because of Your daily direction and kindness towards me that I was able to complete my degree. I'll continue to have faith in you for the future. Additionally, I would want to recognise and express my gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Samuel J. Osifo, for making this work possible. I was able to complete my project with the support of his direction and counsel at every turn. With particular thanks to the acting head of the department, Dr. Samuel J. Osifo, and my course advisers, Dr. E.C. Gbandi and Mrs. O. Iyamu, for their knowledge, experience, and unwavering support during my university studies, I would like to thank all of the lecturers in the Department of Marketing. Finally, I would want to express my gratitude to Mr. Julius, Sister Elizabeth Jubril, Uncle Oroyo, and my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Jubril, for their unwavering support and understanding as I conducted my research and wrote my thesis. I have been kept going thus far by your prayer for me. God be with every one of you.

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ABSTRACT

This study concentrated on Benin City's microbusiness growth and digital marketing. Four hundred (400) small business owners in Benin City were the study's target respondents. The same number of questionnaires were distributed to them, and all of them were fully retrieved and filled out. This resulted in an impressive 100.0% response rate, ensuring that the subsequent analyses are based largely on respondent input. The following are some of the conclusions drawn from the empirical investigation: in Benin City, Nigeria, it was shown that affiliate marketing significantly influences the expansion of small and medium-sized firms; also, the analysis showed that there is no relationship between viral marketing on the growth of small and medium-sized businesses in Benin City, Nigeria. It was discovered that, in Benin City, Nigeria, email marketing has little bearing on the expansion

of small and medium-sized enterprises. The analysis showed there is a significant relationship between social media marketing and the expansion of small and medium-sized businesses in Benin City, Nigeria, and the study found a significant relationship between online advertising and small and medium-sized business growth in Benin City, Nigeria. These results led to the following recommendation: given the substantial impact of viral marketing on the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises, it is prudent for owners of these organisations to produce shareable material that arouses feelings or adds value. Promote involvement and material created by users. Despite the conclusion that email marketing has little effect on the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises, it should nevertheless make use of popular subjects and current affairs to make their content more pertinent. In order to boost interaction, personalise their emails. For more focused marketing efforts, segment their email list according to user behaviour. For higher open rates, use attention-grabbing subject lines. email correspondence should be mobile-friendly. The growth of small and medium-sized enterprises has been linked to affiliate marketing; therefore, it is recommended that affiliates be selected based on how well they fit with their target audience and brand. Experiment with different aspects including images, CTAs, and copy to maximise performance. Give your affiliates the resources and tools they need to successfully promote your items. To encourage affiliates, provide them with favourable commission rates. To maximise marketing effectiveness, track and evaluate affiliate performance. To build a solid relationship with affiliates, establish clear routes of contact.

Marketing on Social Media ought to Interact with their audience by quickly answering messages and comments. Use social media analytics to monitor results and modify your approach as necessary. Work together with influencers to reach more people. Launch specialised advertising strategies to connect with particular audiences and boost conversions. Internet-based marketing for ads Monitoring and evaluating the performance indicators of their advertising campaigns on a regular basis is one of the main recommendations for online advertising marketing.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Information plays a crucial part in all facets of (small and medium-sized enterprises), business, and industry since it is essential to an effective market operation (Gherghina, 2020). A productive and abundant information environment helps economic actors make well-informed decisions, gives SMEs avenues to connect with current and new clients, and fosters a public-private dialogue that facilitates the creation of relevant business environment reform plans (Grimahaw, koukoadaki & tavora, 2017).

In several development fields, digital marketing has caught the attention of development practitioners (Dwivedi, 2021). The emergence of the digital marketing sector marks a significant

shift in the approach to poverty reduction projects, offering innovative avenues to support the development of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) (Franke & Alexander, 2019).

The modern understanding of the mass media should be that of a conduit for a dynamic and varied two-way flow of information, allowing operators in the informal economy to impact the SME reform that would ultimately impact them (Carison, 2018). According to the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) in 2020, SMEs are generally described as companies with an annual turnover of less than N100 million and/or fewer than 300 employees (Adeodu, 2020). Research conducted by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) indicates that approximately 96% of Nigerian businesses are classified as SMEs, a much higher proportion compared to 53% in the US and 65% in Europe, SMEs make up around 90% of the manufacturing/industrial sector in terms of the number of enterprises (Goodluck, 2021). However, they only contribute approximately 1% to Nigeria's GDP, in contrast to Asian countries where they contribute around 40%, and in the US or Europe where they contribute around 50%. Additionally, SMEs in Nigeria are geographically concentrated in clusters within various regions, as noted by (Oyeleran-Oyeyinka, 2020). Nigerian businesses encounter a wide range of issues as a result of several national and international economic issues as well as inconsistent policy (Dana & Ratten, 2017).

Digital marketing enables companies to communicate directly with their clients and reach millions of individuals in order to advertise their goods, all without the expensive consequences of traditional media marketing (Khanom, 2023). There has been a shift in the way producers and their clients do business (porter, 2021).

For the majority of SMEs, crafting unique messaging for different platforms is not difficult (Omotoshi, 2023). Therefore, social media is a crucial tool for every organisation as it enables them to interact with clients, hear what they have to say, and gain knowledge from them faster and with less resources than they would need if they used traditional communication techniques (Grewal & Levy, 2020). Additionally, by embracing social media, a lot of small businesses have improved their accessibility and awareness of their clientele (Sajid, 2023). Today's most widely used social networking sites include Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, and LinkedIn (Kenton, 2023). A survey conducted revealed that most SMEs in Benin City employ between 20 and 50 people, and their annual income ranges from N20 million to N50 million (Gbandi Osasere & Iyamu, 2022). The emergence of social media has been welcomed despite studies on social media and SMRs being conducted in other countries as well as in Nigeria (Bakare, 2018). This is because they have been unable to fully utilize the possibilities of traditional media due to financial constraints (Mundt, Ross, & Burnett, 2018).

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Failure to implement changes could hurt the company in the form of customer attrition, negative growth, stagnation, and the inability to launch new goods, which could eventually lead to business closure (Bushe, 2023). This idea that a company must implement change has resulted in a reliance on digital marketing as one of the instruments for promoting company expansion (Bala & Verma, 2018). Everyone seems to be pushing towards using digital marketing, which has raised issues about whether digital marketing is worth the money for a firm (Chaffey &

Chadwick 2019). It is critical that small and microbusiness growth be sustained given the growing emphasis on small and medium-sized businesses' (SMEs) investments' survival and expansion in Benin City as a crucial sector that can drive sustainable economic growth (Idehen, 2021).

1.3 Research Questions

- i. What is the relationship between affiliate marketing on the growth of small and medium-sized businesses in Benin City, Nigeria
- ii. What is the relationship between online advertising marketing on the growth of small and medium-sized businesses in Benin City, Nigeria
- iii. What impact does viral marketing have on the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises in Benin City, Nigeria
- iv. What impact does email marketing have on the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises in Benin City, Nigeria
- v. What impact does social media marketing have on the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises in Benin City, Nigeria

1.4 Objectives of the study

Analyzing the effectiveness of different digital marketing channels and tactics in reaching and engaging with target audiences for macro businesses in Benin City.

The aims of this study are;

- i. To examine the relationship between affiliate marketing and the growth of small and medium-sized businesses in Benin City, Nigeria.
- ii. To analyze the relationship between online advertising marketing and the growth of small and medium-sized businesses in Benin City, Nigeria.
- iii. To assess the impact of viral marketing on the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises in Benin City, Nigeria.
- iv. To investigate the impact of email marketing on the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises in Benin City, Nigeria.
- v. To explore the impact of social media marketing on the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises in Benin City, Nigeria.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

The research will investigate the following hypotheses:

H1: The expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises in Benin City, Nigeria, is not significantly correlated with affiliate marketing.

H2: In Benin City, Nigeria, the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises is not significantly correlated with online advertising marketing.

H3. The growth of small and medium-sized businesses in Benin City, Nigeria, is not significantly impacted by viral marketing.

H4: In Benin City, Nigeria, email marketing has no appreciable effect on the growth of small and medium-sized businesses

. H5. In Benin City, Nigeria, social media marketing has no appreciable effect on the growth of small and medium-sized businesses.

1.6 Significance of the study

The study will be significant to students, business operators and the general public.

Educational significance for students: The study provides valuable insights and knowledge to students, enhancing their understanding of business concepts, strategies, and operations. Students can apply the findings of the study in their academic pursuits, enriching their learning experience and preparing them for future careers in business or related fields.

Practical significance for business operators: Business operators can benefit from the study by gaining actionable insights and recommendations that can help them make informed decisions and improve their business operations. The study may offer practical strategies and best practices for enhancing efficiency, profitability, and competitiveness in the market.

Relevance to the general public: The study contributes to the general public's understanding of the business world and its impact on their daily lives. By providing insights into how businesses operate and make decisions, the study empowers individuals to make more informed consumer choices and understand the broader economic landscape.

Contribution to knowledge and research: The findings of the study may contribute to existing knowledge in the field of business management, economics, or related disciplines. Researchers

and scholars can build upon the study's findings to conduct further research, expand theoretical frameworks, or address unanswered questions in the field.

Potential for social and economic impact: Insights gained from the study may have broader implications for society and the economy by informing policy decisions, promoting sustainable business practices, or fostering innovation and entrepreneurship. By understanding the factors that drive business success and competitiveness, stakeholders can work towards creating a more prosperous and sustainable business environment.

1.7 Scope of the study

The scope of the study covers the role of digital marketing to the growth of SMEs in Benin City which will be carried out from November 2023 to April 2024. The level of analysis in this study is the organizational level thus data concerning the demographic characteristics of the subjects and observable indicators of the study constructs will be generated by eliciting independent responses from business owners in SMEs.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into three sections; conceptual review, theoretical review and empirical review. The conceptual review shall discuss concepts related to digital marketing and growth of small and medium scale enterprises. The theoretical review shall touch on pertinent theories on the effect of digital marketing on growth of small and medium scale enterprises. The chapter concludes with the review of empirical literature by presenting previous studies conducted in

relation digital marketing, and growth of small and medium scale enterprises as well as their findings.

2.2 Conceptual Review

2.2.1 Small and Medium Scale Enterprises (SMEs)

The concept of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) emerged in the development narrative around the late 1940s, primarily aimed at bolstering trade and industrialization in developed countries (Hoffman, 2023). The criteria for defining SMEs often depend on their economic role within a specific country and the strategies and measures adopted by agencies or institutions dedicated to promoting SME growth (Gherghina, Botezatu, Hosszu & Simionescu, 2020). For instance, a business deemed small in developed economies like Japan, Germany, and the USA might be regarded as medium or large in a developing context such as Nigeria, highlighting the relative nature of SME classification (Folajinmi & Peter, 2020). Additionally, the definition of SMEs is not static and may vary over time and among different developmental organizations, reflecting shifts in policy focus.

However, the definition of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) can be delineated using various criteria such as turnover, employee count, profit, capital, market presence, and industry position, with the option to employ either quantitative or qualitative measures (Fadil & St-Pierre, 2021). Quantitative definitions typically focus on financial metrics like revenue, asset value, and profit, alongside workforce numbers (Singh & Pillai, 2022). For instance, the 1975 Companies

Act in the UK defined businesses as small, medium, or large based on turnover thresholds of less than £1.4 million, between £1.4 and £5.7 million, and over £5.7 million, respectively (Aladelusi, 2019). Yeboah (2021) differentiated enterprises based on employee numbers, categorizing those with under 50 employees as small, between 50 to 250 as medium, and over 250 as large. Furthermore, the European Union's 1996 classification of SMEs includes businesses with fewer than 250 employees, subdividing them into micro (less than 10 employees), small (10 to 49 employees), and medium-sized (50 to 249 employees) entities (Aladelusi, 2019).

In Nigeria, the National Council of Industry, 2003 categorized enterprises based on three criteria:

Size	No. Of Employees	Total Cost Including Working Capital But Excluding Land
Micro	1-10	Less than 1 Million
Small	11-35	1Million – less than 40Million
Medium	36-100	40Million – less than 200Million
Large	101 and Above	200Million and Above

Source: Fadil and St-Pierre (2021)

The criterion of asset base is a widely employed metric in Nigeria. As per the 2005 Small and Medium Enterprise Investment Scheme (SMEIS) guideline released by the Central Bank of Nigeria, a Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) is characterised as an enterprise whose asset

base does not exceed 200 million naira, with the exception of land and working capital. The SME guideline does not provide any specific range or threshold for the number of employees that should be employed by a small or medium-sized enterprise.

The employment of exclusively quantitative metrics for the categorisation of small and medium-sized enterprises has exhibited deficiencies in multiple facets. This phenomenon can be attributed to the cyclic fluctuations of the indices caused by inflation, which may sometimes lead to misleading outcomes. It is noteworthy that the definition of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) as provided by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) may not be all-encompassing, as it may exclude a number of small businesses in Nigeria that are commonly referred to as micro-enterprises (Eneh & Anyahara, 2020). The concept that the magnitude of a business is exclusively ascertained by the quantity of labourers hired is fallacious. The reason for this phenomenon is that certain businesses may rely heavily on labour and consequently possess a substantial workforce, whereas others may rely more on capital and possess a greater asset base but fewer personnel (Le, Nguyen & Vo, 2023). The classification of small and medium enterprises cannot be based solely on profit, as both small and large firms are equally vulnerable to incurring losses. The insufficiencies of quantitative delineations require a qualitative delineation based on predetermined attributes of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

2.2.2 SMEs' Growth

The concept of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Growth has been extensively explored in academic literature, particularly in the context of the impact of digital marketing. This review begins by critically evaluating various definitions of SMEs' Growth. A definition by Neumeyer, Santandreu and Morris (2018) emphasizes the increase in size and value of a business, considering factors like revenue, market share, and employee count. Similarly, Ayyagari, Demirguc-Kunt and Maksimovic (2018) focus on the expansion of an enterprise's economic footprint, including aspects like sales, assets, and production capacity. These perspectives align with those of Chittithaworn et al. (2015), who consider growth in terms of business expansion and market penetration. Analoui and Karami (2017) extend this definition, incorporating the strategic development of capabilities and resources. Interestingly, Storey (2016) and Zhou, Wang and Wan (2018) converge on the notion of sustainable development, not just in scale but also in the enterprise's ability to innovate and adapt to changing market dynamics. These definitions collectively underscore a multi-dimensional understanding of SMEs' growth, integrating aspects of size, capability, market presence, and sustainability.

In exploring the elements and components of SMEs' Growth, it is crucial to consider both internal and external factors. Internal components include organizational capabilities, resource management, and strategic planning (Zhou, Wang, & Wan, 2018). The importance of leadership and entrepreneurial skills in driving growth is emphasized by Analoui and Karami (2017). Ayyagari, Demirguc-Kunt and Maksimovic (2018) asserted that market conditions, regulatory

environments, and technological advancements fall under the external components of the environment which also influences SMEs growth. The role of digital marketing in this context is pivotal. Neumeyer, Santandreu and Morris (2018) and Chittithaworn et al. (2015) discuss how digital marketing strategies can significantly enhance market reach, customer engagement, and ultimately, business growth. This broad spectrum of growth components reflects the complexity and multifaceted nature of SMEs' expansion.

The empirical importance of SMEs' Growth is well documented. SMEs are critical to economic development, contributing significantly to employment and GDP (Ayyagari, Demirguc-Kunt, & Maksimovic, 2018). Storey (2016) highlights their role in fostering innovation and competition, which benefits the wider economy. The impact of digital marketing on SMEs' growth is particularly noteworthy. Neumeyer, Santandreu and Morris (2018) find that digital marketing tools provide SMEs with cost-effective means to reach wider markets and personalize customer experiences. Chittithaworn et al. (2015) note the increased ability of SMEs to compete with larger firms through effective digital marketing strategies. This empirical evidence underscores the significance of SMEs' growth not just for the enterprises themselves but for the broader economic ecosystem.

2.2.3 Measurements of SMEs' Growth

2.2.3.1 Sales Performance

The amount of money that an organisation sells in a certain amount of time is measured as sales performance. In order to perform successfully in sales, businesses must create effective marketing strategies that allow them to generate a respectable volume of sales (Baehre, O'Dwyer, O'Malley, and Lee, 2022). Sales, as defined by Servais and Jensen (2012), is the process by which sellers give customers ownership of their products in return for payment. In a similar spirit, Kotler and Armstrong (2013) defined sales as the process of exchanging money for a product (goods or services). Therefore, sales performance is the quantity of items sold in a specific time period relative to the anticipated or projected amount that a company sets out. This suggests that better business growth in terms of revenue creation is a result of higher sales performance. Every organisation determines its own monthly, quarterly, or annual sales goal. A company is said to be performing well in sales when its monthly, quarterly, or annual sales quotas are met. A company's market share, earnings, and sales growth are all determined by its sales performance (Okpara & Kumbiadis, 2008). Sales efficiency is the rate at which each task in the sales process is finished, and sales effectiveness is the ability of a company's sales professionals to "win" at each stage of the customer's buying process and ultimately earn the business on the right terms and in the right timeframe (Rodriguez, Ajjan & Peterson, 2016). Together, these two factors determine sales performance. Faleye (2022) defines sales performance as a direct enticement that offers the product's sales force, distributors, or customers an extra value or incentive with the main objective of making an instant sale. Sriviboon (2022) asserts that a

company's or an employee's level of client loyalty is reflected in their sales performance. We will measure sales performance in this study using sales growth, sales turnover, and repeat purchases. Below is a quick discussion of these measures:

i. Repeat buy: The term "repeat purchase" refers to a customer's fervent desire to regularly use a company's goods or service. Repeat purchases are defined by Surana and Gandhi (2022) as a customer's behaviour in which he or she regularly purchases goods or services from a specific business. Stated differently, a repeat buyer is someone who is willing to make additional purchases from a specific business. Recurring purchases are advantageous to the business and the client. According to Chin (2014) and Garga & Bambale (2016), personal recognition, preferential service, special discounts, time savings, and credit facilities are some of the benefits that customers receive when they make repeat purchases. Recurring purchases will help a business improve its market share and boost sales income (Amadi, 2022).

ii. Sales Growth: A company's increase in sales over a given period of time is referred to as sales growth (Baehre, O'Dwyer, O'Malley & Lee, 2022). According to Hasan, Kabir, Shuvro, and Das (2022), analysing a company's sales on a monthly, quarterly, or annual basis might help determine sales growth. If the current month's sales exceed those of the prior month, sales growth is said to have occurred.

iii. Sales Turnover: The frequency with which an organisation sells its stock is referred to as sales turnover (Amadi & Obasi, 2022). Additionally, a company's sales turnover is determined by how many things it sells in a specific time frame (Hertati, Puspitawati, Gantino & Ilyas, 2022). A company's sales turnover can be measured over a variety of time periods.

2.2.3.2 Customers Satisfaction

In light of the extremely competitive business environment and increased consumer awareness, customer satisfaction has become a significant topic for scholars and practitioners. As a result, in order to remain competitive and sustainable, marketers must maintain client happiness. Customer/user satisfaction is a business term that refers to how well a company's product meets the needs of its customers. In this day and age of strong competition, every company aims to achieve consumer happiness in a competitive climate, which is seen as a vital component of success for all organizations. The firm has ensured the safety of its consumers to assure the highest level of customer (user) satisfaction, as every customer (user) seeks safety (Naveed, Akhtar & Rehman, 2012).

Ahmed (2014) defines customer satisfaction as the degree to which customers are satisfied with the things provided by enterprises. To achieve this level of enjoyment, businesses must evaluate their consumers' needs and wishes and give them with great products and services. In a highly

competitive business, any organization can gain a competitive advantage by providing outstanding customer service. It is a subjective emotion felt by any consumer after purchasing and using a product, regardless of whether or not the goods or service satisfies the consumer's expectations. People create their expectations and views of a brand product initially through positive word of mouth from friends and family, as well as through sales and promotion operations that use market approaches. Customers who are displeased with the goods or services may complain to others. According to Deng, Lu, Wei and Zhang (2020), a client experiences cumulative gratification after a positive product or service experience. Furthermore, the authors divide satisfaction into two categories: transactional satisfaction and total enjoyment. While the former refers to client satisfaction following a specific service engagement, the latter refers to consumers' overall evaluation of the service or product based on prior experiences. Customer satisfaction, according to the previously described criteria, is the consequence of a customer's appraisal of the service provided in relation to their expectations.

2.2.3.3 Profitability

Profitability is the capacity of an investment to generate a return on its use, according to Tulsian (2014). According to Buvaneshwaran and Bai (2015), profitability shows the outcome of business operations. A company's operational performance can be measured relative to its profitability. The terms profit and ability combine to form the word profitability (Tulsian, 2014). The ability of a corporation to produce profits, which reflects its earning potential or operating performance, is what he means by profit, while the actual

operating performance and efficiency of a company are what he means by ability. The capacity to turn a profit is what Lakhtaria (2013) defines as profitability.

According to Lakhtaria (2013), profitability is the ability of a business to turn a profit both now and in the future. Even though efficiency and profitability are practically interchangeable, profitability is still seen as a gauge or indicator of efficiency and a direction for management as they work towards increasing efficiency (Enekwe, Okwo & Ordu, 2013). Despite their common usage, profit and profitability are not the same concepts. While profitability measures operational performance in relation to others, profit measures operational performance in absolute terms (Tulsian, 2014; Ali & Imdadul, 2014). Although profitability analysis is considered the most effective method for assessing capital used productivity and operational efficiency, profit is meaningless when compared to a company's efficiency.

A company's ability to make a profit affects its performance, enables it to function well in a competitive market, and fosters economic growth (Sohail, Iqbal, Tariq & Mumtaz, 2013). Profitability is a gauge of how well management generates income with the resources at hand (Bordeianu & Radu, 2020). According to Tauringana and Afrifa (2013), an organization's profitability is commonly described as its capacity to generate financial benefit or profit. As per Tauringana and Afrifa (2013). Any firm must be profitable in

order to succeed and expand (Onwumere, Ibe & Ugbam, 2012). This suggests that a company's profitability has a significant impact on its long-term survival.

2.2.3.4 Customer Retention

According to Salem (2021), customer retention is the process of directing a company's marketing efforts towards its current clientele. According to Simoes and Nogueira (2022), companies that engage in customer retention initiatives should prioritise ensuring the satisfaction of their current clientele in order to establish enduring relationships, as opposed to focusing on acquiring new ones. According to Gold (2020), keeping clients from moving to competitors is the marketing objective of customer retention. Customer retention is the process by which businesses concentrate their efforts on their current clientele in an attempt to maintain a commercial relationship, according to Choi (2020).

Repeat business is a crucial consumer behaviour (Syafarudin, 2021). A firm can only benefit from a customer's loyalty if they continue to use its services. This guarantees the long-term partnership, upkeep, and ongoing trading connections. It also entails an organization's capacity to endure the level of competition that exists today, whether it is fierce or not, opening the door for recurring purchases over an extended length of time. Retention gives the true picture of attrition. The attrition rate decreases as client retention rises.

Rosli and Nayan (2020) state that historically, businesses have focused a great deal of attention on bringing in new clients rather than keeping their current clientele. In addition, historically, businesses have placed a greater emphasis on closing deals than developing long-term relationships, on pre-selling and selling than on providing after-sale support. In SMEs, customer retention encompasses keeping consumers after they have lapsed or cancelled their business in addition to the ongoing obligation and commitment to regular patronage (Acee-Eke & Ogonu, 2020).

2.2.4 Digital Marketing

Digital marketing, as a pivotal element in the contemporary business environment, has garnered significant attention in scholarly discourse (Tuten & Solomon, 2017). The conceptualization of digital marketing varies among authors, yet there is a consensus on its essence as a tool for engaging with customers through digital channels. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) define digital marketing as the management and execution of marketing using electronic media. Similarly, Tiago and Verissimo (2014) emphasize the utilization of digital technologies to achieve marketing objectives. Ryan (2016) extends this view by highlighting the strategic aspect, focusing on targeted, measurable, and interactive marketing. Taiminen and Karjaluoto (2015) introduce the perspective of digital marketing as a means of creating value and forming relationships. Kotler and Armstrong (2018) define digital marketing within the broader context of marketing that exists in the digital realm, encompassing all electronic media. Leeflang et al. (2014) add to this by discussing the role of digital channels in shaping consumer behavior and

decision-making processes. These definitions, while varied, collectively underscore digital marketing's role in leveraging digital technologies for strategic, interactive, and customer-focused marketing initiatives.

The elements and components of digital marketing are diverse and multifaceted. SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is a critical component, as highlighted by Patel and Deliya (2012), which involves optimizing websites to improve their visibility in search engine results. Content marketing, as discussed by Holliman and Rowley (2014), focuses on creating and distributing relevant content to attract and engage a target audience. Social media marketing, a component emphasized by Tuten and Solomon (2017), involves using social media platforms to connect with the audience, build the brand, drive website traffic, and increase sales. Email marketing, according to Merisavo et al. (2017), remains an effective digital marketing tool for communicating directly with potential and existing customers. Mobile marketing, as explored by Shankar and Balasubramanian (2019), takes advantage of the increasing use of mobile devices, emphasizing the importance of optimizing marketing efforts for mobile compatibility.

The importance of digital marketing in the contemporary business landscape cannot be overstated. Kaplan and Haenlein (2020) argue that digital marketing enhances brand awareness and reach, offering cost-effective solutions compared to traditional marketing methods. Leung et al. (2015) highlight the role of digital marketing in facilitating real-time customer engagement and feedback, which is crucial for business adaptability and customer relationship management.

Chaffey and Smith (2017) discuss how digital marketing analytics provide invaluable insights into customer preferences and behavior, enabling more targeted and effective marketing strategies. Furthermore, Lamberton and Stephen (2016) emphasize the role of digital marketing in creating personalized customer experiences, which are key to customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Linking digital marketing to the growth of SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises), it becomes evident that digital marketing plays a critical role in their expansion and competitiveness. Gilmore, Gallagher, and Henry (2017) argue that digital marketing offers SMEs cost-effective tools to compete in the market, reach wider audiences, and enhance customer engagement. Hinson, Boateng, and Madichie (2018) underscore the significance of digital marketing for SMEs in developing economies, where it serves as a critical driver of market access and growth. Durkin, McGowan, and McKeown (2019) highlight the role of digital marketing in enabling SMEs to build brand awareness and loyalty more efficiently than traditional marketing methods. Additionally, Reijonen and Laukkanen (2019) stress that digital marketing provides SMEs with the ability to measure marketing effectiveness more accurately, leading to better resource allocation and marketing strategies.

2.2.4.1 Affiliate Marketing

Affiliate marketing, a pivotal component of digital marketing strategies, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), has been extensively studied in recent literature. It involves a

performance-based marketing approach where a business rewards one or more affiliates for each visitor or customer brought by the affiliate's own marketing efforts (Duffy, 2015; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). This definition aligns closely with that of Pousttchi and Herrmann (2016), who emphasize the commission-based reward structure inherent in affiliate marketing. Further, Bennett (2016) adds that affiliate marketing often relies on digital platforms to optimize these relationships. These definitions collectively underscore a digitally-driven, performance-based marketing strategy emphasizing incentivized partnerships.

Moving into the elements and components of affiliate marketing, it is crucial to recognize its multifaceted nature. Grayson and Hodges (2017) identify key elements such as the choice of affiliate network, the commission model, and the selection of suitable affiliates. This perspective is echoed by Singh and Veron-Jackson (2018), who stress the importance of aligning the affiliate's audience with the product or service offered. Moreover, Patel and Naik (2019) highlight the technological aspect, noting the significance of tracking and analytics tools in measuring the effectiveness of affiliate campaigns.

The empirical importance of affiliate marketing cannot be overstated. According to research by Johnson and Urban (2020), affiliate marketing contributes significantly to generating online revenue, with a notable increase in conversion rates compared to other marketing methods. Furthermore, Kaur and Arora (2020) found that affiliate marketing enhances brand visibility and customer reach, which is particularly beneficial for SMEs with limited marketing budgets.

Linking affiliate marketing to the growth of SMEs, studies indicate a strong correlation. Thompson and Stradling (2021) demonstrate that SMEs leveraging affiliate marketing can achieve cost-effective market expansion and improved customer acquisition. In support of this, Lee and Kim (2022) provide evidence that affiliate marketing strategies significantly contribute to the revenue growth and market presence of SMEs, emphasizing its role in leveling the playing field against larger competitors.

2.2.4.2 Viral Marketing

Viral marketing, a term that has garnered substantial attention in the digital marketing sphere, particularly in the context of small and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs), represents a nuanced and multifaceted concept. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2016), viral marketing is defined as a strategy that encourages individuals to pass on a marketing message to others, creating the potential for exponential growth in the message's exposure and influence. This definition aligns closely with the perspective of Todor (2015), who emphasizes the role of viral marketing in leveraging social networks to amplify message dissemination. Similarly, De Bruyn and Lilien (2017) describe it as a method that uses pre-existing social networks to produce increases in brand awareness, through a self-replicating viral process akin to the spread of pathogens. These definitions collectively underscore the emphasis on exponential growth and the utilization of social networks, though they vary in their focus on the mechanisms and outcomes of such strategies.

Building upon these conceptual foundations, the elements and components of viral marketing are diverse and multifaceted. As noted by Smith, Coyle, Lightfoot, and Scott (2017), an essential component is the content's emotional appeal, which significantly influences sharing behavior. This is complemented by Hinz, Skiera, Barrot, and Becker (2021), who highlight the importance of the message's novelty and its relevance to the target audience. Further, Berger and Milkman (2018) argue that content that evokes high-arousal positive (awe) or negative (anger or anxiety) emotions is more likely to go viral. Additionally, Guadagno, Rempala, Murphy, and Okdie (2013) identify the role of the medium, suggesting that the ease with which content can be shared (the user-friendliness of a platform) is critical in viral marketing campaigns.

The empirical importance of viral marketing is evident in its impact on consumer behavior and business outcomes. Katona, Zubcsek, and Sarvary (2014) assert that the inherent organic and self-propagating characteristics of viral marketing substantially reduce customer acquisition costs. This is echoed in research by Dobeles, Toleman, and Beverland (2015), who note that successful viral marketing can lead to increased brand awareness and, subsequently, enhanced brand equity. Furthermore, van der Lans, van Bruggen, Eliashberg, and Wierenga (2020) demonstrate the potential of viral marketing in creating rapid and widespread brand exposure, thus impacting consumer attitudes and purchase intentions.

In the context of SMEs, the linkage between viral marketing and growth is particularly pronounced. As highlighted by Moran, Muzellec, and Nolan (2014), SMEs, with their often-

limited marketing budgets, can leverage viral marketing to achieve substantial market reach and engagement at a relatively low cost. This is supported by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019), who argue that viral marketing offers SMEs the opportunity to compete with larger firms by maximizing online visibility and engagement. Additionally, De Vries, Gensler, and Leeflang (2012) found that SMEs utilizing viral marketing techniques can enhance customer loyalty and retention, key drivers of long-term business growth.

2.2.4.3 Online Advertising

Online Advertising, a cornerstone of digital marketing strategies, has evolved significantly over the past decade. Its definitions, as presented by various authors, reflect a diversity of perspectives. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) define online advertising as the utilization of internet channels to deliver promotional marketing messages to consumers. This perspective emphasizes the medium more than the content. In contrast, Taiminen and Karjaluo (2015) describe it as a form of communication employed by businesses to persuade, inform, and remind consumers about their products or services through the internet. This definition adds a communicative and purpose-driven dimension. Further, Leeflang et al. (2014) approach online advertising as a digital tactic that encompasses all marketing activities that use an electronic device or the internet. This broad perspective captures the omnipresence of digital devices in advertising.

Bak, and Kim (2018) view online advertising as interactive, data-driven, and tailored to individual consumer preferences. This highlights the personalized nature of online advertising, a

view shared by Okazaki and Taylor (2013), who focus on the tailored communication strategies used in the digital realm. Lastly, Yadav and Pavlou (2014) identify online advertising as a mechanism that blends technology and social interaction, considering the role of social media. These definitions collectively underscore the multifaceted nature of online advertising, integrating the medium, communication strategy, personalization, interactivity, and social dimensions.

The elements and components of online advertising are diverse and multi-layered. Search Engine Marketing (SEM), as discussed by Ghose and Yang (2018), is a crucial component, enabling businesses to increase their visibility on search engine result pages. Display Advertising, as explored by Goldfarb and Tucker (2021), encompasses visual ads, including banners and videos, often leveraging user data for targeted advertising. Social Media Advertising, a rapidly evolving component, as detailed by De Vries, Gensler, and Leeflang (2012), utilizes platforms like Facebook and Twitter for brand promotion. Email Marketing, an enduring component highlighted by Kumar, Choi, and Greene (2017), remains relevant through personalized and direct communication. Affiliate Marketing, as discussed by Duffy (2015), involves partnering with individuals or companies to promote products or services on a commission basis. Lastly, Content Marketing, a strategy emphasized by Holliman and Rowley (2014), focuses on creating and distributing valuable content to attract and engage a specific target audience.

The empirical significance of online advertising is substantial. As per a study by Kritzinger and Weideman (2013), online advertising has shown to significantly enhance brand awareness and recall. Baltes (2015) elaborates on this by highlighting its role in building brand identity and fostering customer engagement. Goh, Heng, and Lin (2013) underscore the cost-effectiveness and measurable outcomes of online advertising, making it a powerful tool for businesses of all sizes. Furthermore, Brengman, Geuens, and Weijters (2013) emphasize its ability to reach a wider and more diverse audience, expanding market reach beyond traditional boundaries.

Linking online advertising to the growth of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) unveils its critical role in business expansion and sustainability. Gilmore, Gallagher, and Henry (2015) argue that online advertising provides SMEs with an affordable and effective platform to compete with larger corporations. As per Durkin, McGowan, and McKeown (2013), online advertising equips SMEs with the tools to target specific market segments, enhancing their marketing efficiency. Moreover, Järvinen and Taiminen (2016) highlight that the analytics and data-driven aspects of online advertising enable SMEs to make informed decisions, optimizing their marketing strategies for better ROI.

2.2.4.4 Email Marketing

Email marketing entails sending commercial messages to a group of recipients via email (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). It serves diverse purposes, including product or service promotion, brand awareness building, and customer relationship maintenance (Dave, 2020).

Email marketing proves effective due to its capacity to reach a broad audience at a relatively low cost (Gupta & Kohli, 2013). Additionally, it can be personalized and targeted to specific audience segments, enhancing message relevance and overall effectiveness (Araújo, Soares, Pereira, Coelho, Rebelo & Madureira, 2022).

The efficacy of email marketing campaigns is measured through metrics like open rates, click-through rates, and conversion rates (Kumar & Raju, 2018). These metrics provide insights into campaign effectiveness, aiding businesses in refining future endeavors. Email marketing is often integrated with other digital marketing techniques, such as social media and content marketing, leading to a more potent marketing strategy and improved outcomes (Aziz & Abdulqadir, 2023). The amalgamation of these techniques enhances the overall marketing strategy's effectiveness.

Email marketing serves as a cost-effective and efficient approach for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to reach broad audiences and achieve diverse marketing objectives (Zhang & Kim, 2019). However, its usefulness to SMEs depends on factors like the nature of the business, the target audience, and the quality of the email campaign (Mohammad & Murad, 2015).

Email marketing can be exceptionally beneficial to SMEs due to its cost-effectiveness and reach (Gupta & Kohli, 2013). According to Campaign Monitor (2019), email marketing generates a higher return on investment (ROI) than any other marketing channel, with an average ROI of \$42 for every dollar spent. This makes email marketing an attractive choice for SMEs operating with limited budgets (Campaign Monitor, 2019). Moreover, email marketing empowers SMEs to

connect with a vast audience using personalized and targeted messages, enhancing campaign effectiveness (Zhang & Kim, 2019). By segmenting email lists based on factors such as demographics, interests, and behavior, SMEs can tailor their messages to meet the specific needs and interests of each recipient, thus increasing the relevance and efficacy of their campaigns.

2.2.4.5 Social Media Marketing

In addition to helping to create a social network for the purpose of sharing knowledge and ideas, social network marketing involves using a social media platform to advertise a good or service and make it more visible online (Becker, Nobre, & Kanabar, 2013). Different communication techniques are seen as more advantageous than others on several social media platforms. Facebook is well-known for its powerful CRM platform (Popp et al., 2016); Twitter is well-known for its real-time consumer response capabilities and brand messaging (Culotta & Cutler, 2016); Instagram is a platform for sharing visual content (Munoz & Towner, 2017); and YouTube is a platform for sharing videos (Indvik, 2021). Salem and Salem (2019) assert that social media gives consumers access to helpful information about competing brands. If this information lives up to the expectations of the consumer regarding the competitor's product, strong customer satisfaction may result, influencing the customer to select or keep purchasing the item. Using social media platforms, social media is integrated into the marketing mix at every stage and with every component. This is known as social media marketing. It helps to promote the brand and

the products and services offered by the company (Olabanji et al., 2014). Social media marketing gives small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) the opportunity to effectively educate and demonstrate the advantages of their products as well as how to use them effectively through an online platform with the most intended viewership. Businesses are gradually abandoning traditional media marketing in favour of social media marketing (Omotayo et al., 2015). Businesses that use radio and television as traditional marketing channels to promote their products have started encouraging their customers to visit their social media pages for further information in recent years. This is done in an effort to further initiate a conversation about the company, its product, price, and location with the target market. Consumers can advertise on social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to follow the organization's activities and interact with the brand further. This will influence their propensity to make a purchase and recommend the company to their friends. The unmatched potential of social media in three key marketing domains—connections, interaction, and customer data—is the driving force behind the effectiveness of social media marketing (SMM).

Connection: Social media offers businesses an incredible array of ways to connect with their target audiences, from microblogging services like Twitter to content platforms like YouTube and social sites like Facebook. It also allows businesses to connect with customers

in ways that were previously unattainable. Interaction: Because social media interactions are dynamic, businesses can take advantage of free advertising chances from eWOM (electronic word-of-mouth) recommendations between current and potential customers. This applies to both direct conversation and passive "liking." The fact that these interactions take place on social networks renders them observable, in addition to being a valuable motivator of consumer decisions due to the positive contagion impact from eWOM. Businesses, for instance, can calculate their "social equity," which is the ROI (return on investment) from their social media efforts.

Customer Data: An effective social media marketing (SMM) strategy provides access to yet another priceless tool for enhancing marketing results: customer data. The 3Vs of big data—volume, variety, and velocity—should not overwhelm you. SMM tools are able to harvest customer data and transform it into useful market analysis. You may even use the data to crowdsource new tactics

.2.2.4.5.1 Social Media Platforms

2.2.4.5.1.1 Facebook

With more than 1.4 billion registered accounts and 936 million active users globally, Facebook is currently the most popular social networking site. In 2004, Mark Zuckerberg, Dustin Moskovitz, Chris Hughes, and Eduardo Saverin—all of whom he studied computer science with at Harvard University—founded Facebook (Locke referenced in Nnaane, 2021).

Students at Harvard University were the only ones who could initially join Facebook, but later, people from Stanford University and other American universities could also join. Beyond Harvard, Facebook now includes users from every continent as well as other enterprises, business organisations, and educational institutions (Dunay & Krueger, 2020). As per Facebook (2015), Within two years, Facebook has grown from a student social networking site to a global platform for user interaction. Facebook gives businesses two-way connection with their customers in addition to targeting both new and existing ones. Businesses can target or channel the proper market segment with the best tools provided by Facebook. By advertising their brand or setting up a shared presence on Facebook, businesses can raise awareness of their brand. Research indicates that Thursday and Friday are the greatest days to post on social media, accounting for 86% of all posts made throughout the workweek (Castronovo & Huang 2012). Patel (2015) reports that at 1 p.m. on Facebook, the most shares are received, and at 3 p.m., the most clicks. According to Zuckerberg, as stated in (Nweze, 2019), businesses may reach their target market and establish a connection with actual customers by promoting their products and services on Facebook. On Facebook, users may connect and exchange information in many different ways. Users can customise their profile stuff and exchange messages, videos, and photographs. Facebook has launched several new features in recent years, including apps (and their developer platform) and instant messaging/chat. Facebook users employ a variety of methods to connect or communicate with one another, including writing on

another user's wall and sending private messages. Posts made on a user's wall are not visible to the public and are only visible to that user's friends. Additionally, users have the option to modify their privacy settings so that various individuals can view different aspects of their profile depending on any current relationships they may have (friends only, friends of friends, and everyone are the available privacy settings) (Dunay & Krueger2020).

According to Viot (2021), Facebook, with its dominant social media platform that is regarded as a big source of interactivity among people where most clients offer their thoughts, has been a main important communication tool among most organisations in recent years. Businesses can use Facebook as a key element of the promotional mix to create a communication plan for sellable brands, which can then be integrated as a crucial part of an organization's integrated marketing communications (Mangold & Faulds, 2019). Zinnbauer & Honer (2021) contend that social media sites like Facebook need to encourage social currency—defined as the degree to which individuals discuss brand knowledge with others in their social circles. Facebook is very important for marketing, and especially for consumer relationship building. Small businesses are losing out on a lot of chances because they don't know how to use social media platforms like Facebook as a marketing tool (Chung & Buhalis, 2018). According to Halligan, Shah, and Scott (2019), Facebook facilitates communication between companies and their clients, enabling them to better

understand their needs and forge lasting bonds. The most efficient method for company owners to guarantee a prompt and efficient reach to a variety of clients are to share information using social media platforms like Facebook.

2.2.4.5.1.3 Instagram

Instagram is described by Dubovik in Huey and Yazdanifrad (2014) as a mobile application that lets users share images and videos with their followers. When Instagram was first launched in 2010, its only capabilities were photo editing and sharing. However, when development was finished, the ability to share videos was added. With the help of this social media software, users may capture and share any kind of photo or video with their followers—both domestic and foreign—from anywhere at any time. The video is only 15 seconds long, and photographs can be altered with 13 artistic effects (Huey & Yazdanifrad, 2014). According to Atmoko (2012), Instagram's primary characteristics are:

According to Atmoko (2012), Instagram's primary characteristics are:

- i. Instagram followers and followers on the social network follow other user accounts and have Instagram followers.**
- ii. Uploading Pictures: You can get the pictures you wish to post from the device's photo album or by using the camera on the device.**
- iii. Camera: Images captured using the Instagram app can be kept on the iOS device. Instagram users with cameras can also immediately apply pre-existing effects to change the**

desired colour of their images. Instagram only accepts sizes in the form of boxes or in a 3: 2 ratio.

iv. When users wish to alter their images, Instagram offers fifteen different photo effects. The following effects are included: Nashville, 1977, Lord Kelvin, Valencia, Amaro, Rise, Hudson, Brannan, Inkwel, Walden, Hefe, Earlybird, Sutro, and Toaster.

v. Another tool on Instagram allows users to irritate other users by adding a haughty @ symbol and the username of that user's Instagram account. In addition, users are able to remark on the image.

vi. Instagram users can find it easier to search for photographs using keywords by using the Photo Labels code.

vii. Social networking: The Instagram website provides links to share the images on Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare, Tumblr, and Flickr, among other social media platforms.

viii. Love/likes: Instagram also offers a feature called "liking," which indicates that other users find the posted photographs appealing.

ix. Search: By entering keywords from search, you can utilise this option to look for other accounts or desired photographs. in order to make it easier for users to access every photo from every Instagram user account.

According to Bevins in Huey and Yazdanifrad (2014), Instagram is one of the social media platforms that can help businesses or marketers market or promote their goods or services.

According to Saravanakumar and Lakshmi in Huey and Yazdanifrad (2014), a lot of

businesses utilise Instagram to market their brands and cultivate relationships with their clients.

2.2.4.5.1.4 YouTube

Jawed Karim, Steve Chen, and Chad Hurley launched YouTube in 2005. On the website YouTube, users can share videos. One year later, Google bought it. YouTube is the second most searched website behind Google, with over a billion users. A staggering 400 hours are uploaded to YouTube every minute, and millions of hours are spent there each day watching, downloading, and posting videos (YouTube Statistics, 2015). According to Huang and Castronovo (2012), YouTube serves as a forum for individuals to interact, share knowledge, and be inspired by one another. Businesses can use YouTube as a platform to advertise and distribute video content to their clientele. According to Castronovo and Huang (2012), user-generated material on YouTube promotes customer participation.

YouTube is the main website for sharing and creating videos, the third most popular website in the world, and the second most popular search engine worldwide. The platform's immense appeal among social media users can be ascribed to its complimentary membership, content uploading, and/or viewing features. Over 400 hours of video content are uploaded every minute, billions of hours of video content are watched every day, and over half of all YouTube content is viewed on mobile devices. Approximately 1.5 billion people use YouTube monthly, with two-thirds of them being between the ages of 18 and 44 (YouTube Analytics Basics, 2018).

Companies can offer engaging information with their clients by using YouTube as an interactive ICT platform. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2012), YouTube is recognised as a key innovator of the shared economy and collaborative consumption, with a notable impact on sustainability that is predominantly attained through online social network interactions. The uploaded movies that convey the company's social or environmental objectives facilitate their influence on collaborative behaviour (Manetti & Bellucci, 2016).

Having all of the brand's video material accessible on a customised YouTube channel contributes to the brand's increased online visibility. For more exposure and awareness, YouTube also provides paid marketing and video content sharing that are easy to use and affordable. Many options for marketing communication are available on YouTube, including display, overlay, sponsored cards, insearch discovery, video, and bumper (Manetti & Bellucci, 2016). For the purpose of giving a comprehensive picture of YouTube as a marketing communication medium, this study focuses on a few of these tools.

The number of click-through view rates, completed video views and/or shares, and the quantity of comments and likes can all be used to gauge how effective a platform is for marketing communication (YouTube Analytics Basics, 2018). Additional evaluation indicators encompass recall, comprehension, engagement, and feedback from customer evaluations, which disclose

overall attitudes towards a brand's promotional material and impact the audience's subsequent buying decisions. In addition, as this study, which employed a cross-sectional methodology to examine emotive reactions to YouTube's marketing communication, shows, qualitative interviews, content analysis, and/or attitudinal surveys can be utilised to evaluate the efficacy of marketing communication.

2.2.5 Digital Marketing and SMEs performance.

The way organisations operate has changed dramatically as a result of digital marketing. New business models have been created, raising global product and service awareness as well as ROI, customer support, conversion rate, and lead creation. Business owners and managers can communicate ideas, details, and actions with their associates and clientele by using digital marketing (Schaffer, 2013). The performance of SMEs is defined as the actual paybacks SMEs received in both financial and non-financial performance as a result of the adoption of digital marketing technologies like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp, in accordance with Delone and McLean's (2003) Model of Information System IS success.

According to Tajuddeen, Jaafar, and Ainin (2018), the use of digital marketing in SMEs' marketing increases their non-financial performance as well as their financial performance, such as improved customer clientele, increased connectivity, improved brand awareness and reputation, and increased competitive advantage. Similar to this, implementing digital

marketing increases a company's competitive advantage. Managers in businesses can communicate and work together with distributors, customers, suppliers, and consultants by utilising digital marketing. SMEs are better positioned to create strategies that will give them a competitive edge in the ever-evolving global market scenario by utilising an interactive social network platform (Peltier & Naidu, 2012). Previous research's empirical results point to a favourable correlation between SMEs' success and digital marketing. For instance, research by Rodriguez, Gummadi, and Schoelkopf (2014) showed that customer-oriented procedures are positively impacted by digital marketing platforms such as Facebook, which in turn affects an organization's sales performance. Additionally, Wong, Tan, Loke, and Ooi (2015) discovered that SME businesses benefit from using digital marketing. Ainin et al. (2015) found that using digital marketing platforms can boost sales, which lends support to this. Additionally, Shuai and Wu's study from 2021 on digital marketing demonstrates a strong relationship between online marketing and business success. As stated by Solis (2020), According to literature on digital marketing, an organization's performance is greatly increased by digital marketing through improving efficient digital advertising and promotion, managing customer service concerns, cultivating relationships with customers, and generating creative ideas. Therefore, it is likely to have a positive effect on performance when SMEs in Nigeria use digital marketing effectively in their business activities like marketing, customer relations, and information searching, particularly in terms of cost reductions, improved customer relations, and

enhanced information accessibility. A few research, nevertheless (Ahmad et al., 2019; Bakri, 2017) did not find a statistically significant correlation between the success of SMEs and digital marketing.

2.3 Theoretical Literature Review

2.3.1 Opportunity-Based Theory

Drucker (2017) posits that SMEs and entrepreneurs thrive by recognizing and seizing opportunities arising from social, technological, and cultural changes. For instance, when an entrepreneur identifies a need for a restaurant in their social context and capitalizes on that opportunity for profit, it exemplifies the application of opportunity-based theory. This theory further underscores that technological advancements, such as the ongoing developments in telecommunications and the proliferation of communication platforms like social media, are integral to simplifying work processes, reducing operational costs, enhancing profitability, and improving efficiency. However, this theory does not delve into the extent to which such technological changes in the telecom industry have facilitated SMEs' development worldwide (Delmar, Davidson, and Gestner, 2013). It is notable that social media utilization has surged, with many firms utilizing it for brand marketing. Hence, this study draws on this theory to assess how catering service providers have leveraged social media for marketing their products and, consequently, enhancing their businesses.

2.3.2 Evaluation Theory

The evaluation theory contends that decision-making should be guided by unconventional methods (Wang & Wolverton, 2012). It emphasizes the need to consider all possibilities to ensure that the interests of all stakeholders within the sector are taken into account. Perez (2014) suggests that future growth rates in SMEs will hinge on scheduled consumer purchases, underscoring the long-term impact of social media on SME growth. This theory underscores the importance of inclusive decision-making in the SME sector, preventing monopolization by certain forces seeking to protect vested interests. Indeed, social media platforms have transformed SMEs, enabling them to transcend traditional marketing roles. Social media ensures efficiency, allowing customers to access and make choices online without physical presence. In essence, the theory of comparative strategy and assessment aids in establishing equilibrium within small businesses, enabling them to make effective use of digital advertising tools (Mullar, 2016). Social media platforms, by providing avenues for comparison with competitors' offerings, enable marketers to extend their reach beyond traditional market boundaries.

2.3.3 Theory of Consumer Engagement

Consumer engagement, defined by Van Doorn, Lemon, Mittal, Nass, Pick, Pirner, and Verhoef (2020), encompasses customer interactions with a brand or company beyond mere purchases, fostering associations and loyalty in the customer's journey. This concept finds widespread application in industry and business management globally (Gambetti, Graffigna & Biraghi, 2012). Companies that succeed in innovating their approaches while building enduring

relationships with customers exemplify consumer engagement (Sashi, 2012). Prioritizing customer engagement helps businesses gain brand loyalty, ensuring that loyal customers not only remain stakeholders but also create significant value and bolster business equity, addressing customer needs and wants (Akhir, 2012).

In today's business landscape, social media plays a pivotal role in online consumer engagement. While the definition of engagement remains somewhat nebulous, consumer engagement has garnered substantial attention among entrepreneurs. Digital media, especially social media, is crucial for businesses, facilitating two-way communication and appealing to diverse age groups and demographics (Divya & Regi, 2014). Platforms like discussion forums, chat rooms, bulletin boards, emails, and social media networks foster interaction and customer experiences (Brodie, Hollebeek, Juric & Ilic, 2021). Loyal customers can actively participate in developing new products and services, co-creating value and experiences (Wang, 2006). Digital media enables SMEs to maximize digital marketing potential by providing access to markets beyond their immediate geographical reach without the need for physical presence (Siamagka, Christodoulides & Michaelidon, 2015).

2.4 Empirical Review

In the realm of empirical research, several studies have explored the impact of social media and digital marketing on various aspects of business performance. Adebayo and Olukotun (2022) conducted a detailed investigation into the effect of digital marketing practices on the growth of

SMEs in Lagos, Nigeria. The study collected data from 250 SME owners/managers using structured questionnaires. The researchers employed a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical analyses, including regression analysis, to examine the data. The findings revealed that digital marketing significantly impacts SME growth, with social media marketing and email marketing being the most effective channels. The study recommended that SMEs invest more in digital marketing training and tools to enhance their growth prospects.

Chukwuemeka and Afolabi (2021) focused on understanding how the adoption of digital marketing influences the business performance of SMEs in Nigeria. A sample of 300 SMEs was surveyed across different industries in Abuja. The researchers utilized Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) for data analysis. The results indicated that digital marketing adoption positively affects SMEs' business performance, particularly in terms of increased sales and customer base expansion. The study recommended that SMEs in Nigeria should enhance their digital marketing strategies to improve their competitiveness.

Eze and Okpala (2020) aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of digital marketing in enhancing brand awareness and engagement among Nigerian SMEs. Using a purposive sampling technique, data were gathered from 200 SMEs in Enugu state through a structured questionnaire. The study employed the use of ANOVA and regression analysis for data examination. Findings revealed that digital marketing significantly increases brand awareness and engagement among target

audiences. The researchers recommended that SMEs should focus on content quality and interactive digital marketing campaigns to boost their brand presence.

Ogunmokun, Eluwole and Binuyo (2021) investigated the impact of digital marketing on customer retention within the Nigerian SME retail sector. The researchers surveyed 320 SMEs in Lagos State, using stratified random sampling. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS, with techniques such as correlation and regression analysis. The study found that digital marketing, especially through social media and SEO, plays a crucial role in retaining customers. Recommendations included the adoption of personalized digital marketing strategies to enhance customer loyalty.

Uche and Timothy (2021) explored how digital marketing strategies impact the performance of SMEs in Nigeria, considering the mediating role of competitive advantage. Data were collected from 275 SMEs in the service sector in Oyo State through questionnaires. The researchers applied path analysis for data interpretation. The findings highlighted that digital marketing strategies significantly improve SMEs' performance by providing a competitive advantage. It was recommended that SMEs leverage digital analytics to refine their marketing strategies continually.

Idris and Agbim (2020) examined the role of digital marketing in facilitating the internationalization process of Nigerian SMEs. The study surveyed 150 SMEs engaged in international business, using simple random sampling. Multiple regression analysis was

employed to analyze the data. The results showed that digital marketing significantly influences SMEs' ability to enter and expand in international markets. The study suggested that SMEs should adopt more digital marketing channels to enhance their global presence.

Nwankwo and Dibia (2021) explored how digital marketing affects market share expansion among Nigerian SMEs. The research involved 180 SMEs from various sectors in Anambra State, selected through random sampling. Data were analyzed using chi-square and t-tests. The findings indicated a strong relationship between digital marketing practices and market share expansion, with social media and content marketing being the most effective. The researchers recommended that SMEs should focus on data-driven digital marketing strategies to enhance their market share.

Okonkwo and Chinedu (2022) assessed the impact of digital marketing practices on the financial performance of Nigerian SMEs. A total of 230 SMEs across different sectors in Kano State were surveyed using a structured questionnaire. The study utilized factor analysis and multiple regression analysis for data evaluation. The results revealed that digital marketing practices, particularly SEO and online advertising, significantly improve SMEs' financial performance. The study advised SMEs to allocate adequate resources to digital marketing to boost their financial outcomes.

Adeyemi and Salami (2021) investigated the role of digital marketing in enhancing customer satisfaction among Nigerian SMEs. Data were collected from 300 customers of SMEs in Lagos State through a survey. The study used Pearson correlation and regression analysis for data

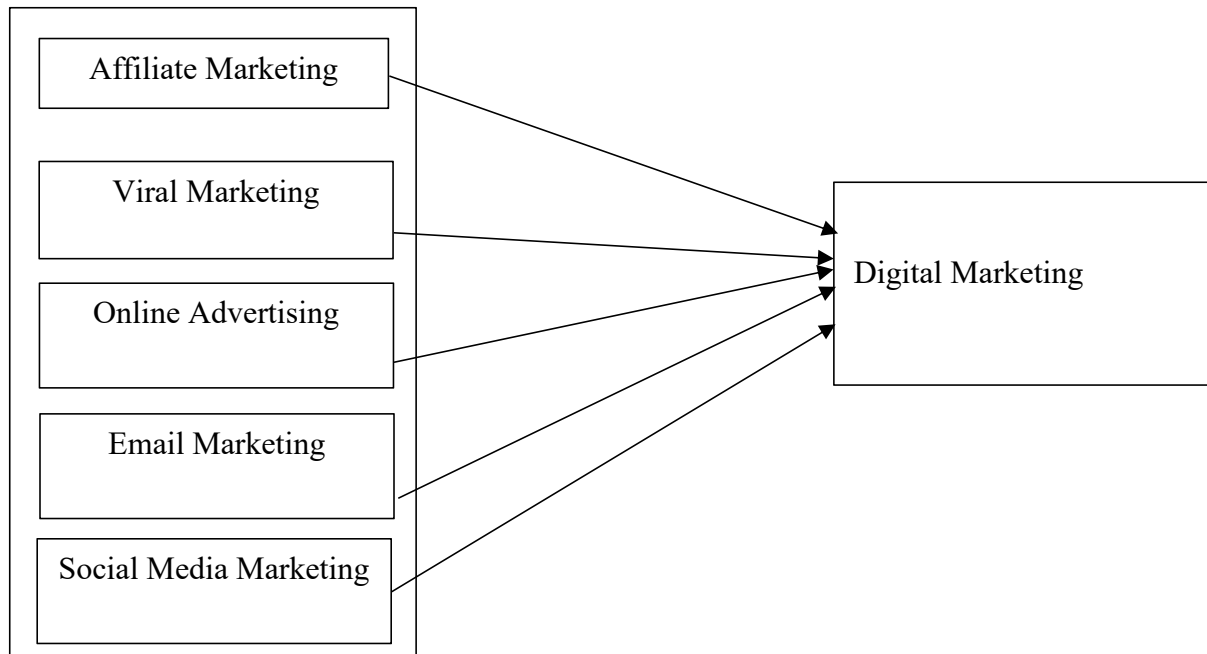
analysis. The findings indicated that digital marketing significantly enhances customer satisfaction, with email marketing and social media being the most impactful channels. The study recommended that SMEs should prioritize customer engagement and feedback through digital channels to improve satisfaction levels.

Okafor and Vincent (2020) assessed the impact of digital marketing on the organizational performance of Nigerian SMEs. The study involved a sample of 260 SMEs from various industries in Rivers State, using purposive sampling. The researchers employed structural equation modeling (SEM) for the analysis. The findings showed that digital marketing has a significant positive impact on the organizational performance of SMEs, particularly in enhancing operational efficiency and market responsiveness. The study recommended that SMEs integrate digital marketing with traditional marketing practices for optimal performance.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is developed to act as a guide as we explore the effect of digital marketing on the growth of small and medium scale enterprises. According to the punch (2005), the conceptual frame work is a narrative representation of the key concept and variable in a research study and their presupposed relationship with each other. It incorporates both the dependent variable (SMEs growth) and the independent variable digital marketing (affiliate marketing, viral marketing, online advertising, email marketing, and social media marketing).

**Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework for the Study
SMEs Growth**



Source: Author's Computation (2024)

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will describe the research methods and procedures used in data collection and analysis which will include the research design, population, sample and sampling techniques, the research instrument, reliability of the research instrument, validity of the research instrument,

sources of data, method of data collection, operationalization and measurement of variables and method of data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

Research design is a frame work of the research method and techniques chosen by the researcher to evaluate the purpose of the study (Switala, 2003). The study will adopt a descriptive survey design. The design will be adopted for the study because the study will utilise questionnaires as its research instrument which would provide basic information about the characteristics of the samples used, it will help in getting vital facts, opinion, attitudes and behavior of the prospective respondents (Zikmund, 2003).

3.3 The Population of the Study

The population of this study will consist of owners of selected small and medium scale businesses in Egor and Ovia North East Local Government Area. The population as retrieved is one million nine hundred and seventy three thousand(1,973,000).

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Sampling techniques are considered to be the strategies used by researchers in the statistical sampling process (Cooper & Schindler, 2001). The researcher will use the convenience sampling technique. This is non-probability sampling method where units are selected for inclusion in the sample because they are the easiest for the researcher to access. Hence, the researcher will distribute copies of questionnaires to respondents that are accessible to him.

3.4.1 Determination of the Sample Size

Using the Taro Yamane's statistical formular to determine the adequate sample size from 1,973,000 which is the population of the study

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

In the formular above;

n is the required sample size from the population understudy

N is the whole population that is understudy

e is the precision or sampling error which is usually 0.10, 0.05 or 0.01

Therefore;

$$n = \frac{1,973,000}{1 + 1,973,000(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1,973,000}{1 + 1,973,000(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{1,973,000}{1 + 4,933.5}$$

$$n = 400(\text{Rounded})$$

After calculating the sample size by substituting the numbers into the Yamane formula, the number of sample is 400.

3.4 The Operationalization and Measurement of Variables

The study focused on examining digital marketing and growth of small and medium scale businesses. The study aims to examine the overall effectiveness of affiliate marketing, viral marketing, email marketing, online advertising, and social media marketing on growth of small and medium scale businesses. The operationalization of the study’s objectives is outlined in the table below,

Table 3.1: Operationalization of Variables

S/N	Variables	Operational Definition	Measurement of the variables	Quantification of variables	of
Section A					

1	Gender		Two-point scale	Question 1
2	Age of SME owner		Five-point scale	Question 2
3	Number of employees		Four point scale	Question 3
4	Age of Business		Four-point scale	Question 4
5	Income (Monthly)		Five-point scale	Question 5
6	Sector		Seven Point Scale	Question 6
Section B				
7	Small scale businesses growth	A measurable increase in revenue, market share, and profitability over a specific period resulting from the implementation of digital marketing strategies.	Likert-type five point scale.	Question 7-11
8	Affiliate marketing	A performance-based online advertising strategy where businesses reward affiliates (partners or individuals) for driving traffic or sales to their website through promotional efforts, typically by receiving a commission on successful	Likert-type five point scale.	Question 12-16

		conversions.		
9	Viral marketing	An operational strategy within digital marketing where businesses create and share compelling, shareable content with the goal of it spreading rapidly and organically among online audiences, thereby increasing brand exposure and potentially driving growth for SMEs.	Likert-type five point scale.	Question 17-21
10	Email marketing	A promotional strategy that involves sending targeted messages and content via email to a group of recipients, often with the goal of engaging, informing, or persuading them to take specific actions, such as making a purchase or signing up for a newsletter, to facilitate the growth of SMEs.	Likert-type five point scale.	Question 22-26
11	Online advertising	The use of digital platforms and channels, such as websites, social media, search engines, and email, to promote products, services, or	Likert-type five point scale.	Question 27- 31

		brands and reach a target audience with paid promotional content.		
12	Social media marketing	The strategic use of social media platforms to promote products or services, engage with target audiences, and achieve specific marketing objectives for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).	Likert-type five point scale.	Question 32- 36

Source: Author’s Computation (2024)

3.5 The Research Instrument

The instrument employed will be a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire will be divided into two sections. Section A will address the demographic information of the respondents while Section B will contain thirty (30) questions constructed in line with the research question earlier stated to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaire will be measured on a 5-point Likert scale response of strongly agree (SA), Agreed (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD).

3.5.1 Reliability of the Instrument

A research instrument's consistency is gauged by its reliability. We'll use the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to assess the questionnaire as the study instrument's dependability.

According to Sekaran (2003), Cronbach's Alpha is a dependability coefficient that indicates how strongly items in a collection are related to one another. The Cronbach's Alpha (α) coefficient, which ranges from 0 to 1, will then be used to determine the reliability of the data related to the variables (Bayram, 2004). Table 3.2 below displays the Cronbach alpha finding and its consequences.

Table 3.2 Cronbach's alpha Reliability Test Results for the Variables under Consideration

VARIABLES	QUESTIONS	CRONBACH ALPHA
Small Scale Businesses Growth	7-11	0.754
Affiliate Marketing	12-16	0.824
Viral Marketing	17-21	0.771
Email Marketing	22-26	0.873
Online Advertising	27- 31	0.936
Social Media Marketing	32- 36	0.864

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork (2024)

Based on the fact that the above reliability scores are above the threshold of 0.70, the research instrument is therefore deemed reliable and internal consistent.

3.5.2 Validity of the Instrument

Validity expresses the degree to which a research instrument measures what it purposes to measure (Bolarinwa, 2015). The validity of the instrument (questionnaires) will be affirmed by the researchers' supervisor and other senior lecturers in the Department of Marketing. Their opinion, suggestions and recommendation will be used to produce the final instrument.

3.6 Sources of Data

The nature of this study demands the use of primary data. The data will be collected through the administration of questionnaires to selected small and medium scale businesses in Egor and Ovia North East Local Government Area.

3.7 Method of Data Collection

The data needed for the purpose of this study will be primarily sourced. The primary data will be extracted from the sampled respondents using a carefully structured questionnaire. The study will be based on a survey of 400 (four hundred) respondents which was drawn from randomly selected small and medium scale businesses in Egor and Ovia North East Local Government Area. The participants will receive guarantees about the confidentiality of any data collected from them via the questionnaires and that the information provided will be utilised exclusively for scientific purposes.

3.8 Data Analysis Methodology

Descriptive and inferential statistics will be employed to analyse the replies obtained from the distributed questionnaires. Frequency and percentage will be used in the descriptive technique to describe the respondents' demographics. Additionally, frequency counts, simple percentages,

means, and standard deviations will be employed to address the study issues. The close link between variables will be examined using the Pearson moment correlation matrix, and the study's hypotheses will be tested using linear regression analysis. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences will be utilised in the analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed examination of the empirical data obtained from the field survey respondents. Precisely, questionnaires were disseminated to randomly selected owners of small and medium scale businesses in Egor and Ovia North East Local Government Area. Notably, the required 400 responses were retrieved, meticulously scrutinized, and then utilized for the subsequent analysis, marking a commendable response rate of 100%.

4.2 Demographic Analysis

The demographic data of the respondents is presented in this section below.

Table 4.1: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
GENDER		
Male	198	49.5
Female	202	50.5
Total	400	100.0
AGE		
Under 20yrs	12	3.0
21 – 25yrs	104	26.0
26-30years	216	54.0
31-35years	50	12.5
36years and above	18	4.5
Total	400	100.0
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES		

Below 5	141	35.3
5-10	153	38.3
11-20	65	16.3
21 and above	41	10.3
Total	400	100.0
AGE OF BUSINESS		
Below 5	135	33.8
5-10	155	38.8
11-20	67	16.8
21 and above	43	10.8
Total	400	100.0
INCOME (MONTHLY)		
Less 100,000	143	35.8
100,001-200,000	155	38.8
200,001-500,000	59	14.8
500,001 and above	43	10.8
Total	400	100.0
SECTOR		
ICT	48	12.0
Agriculture	68	17.0
Hospitality	23	5.8
Beauty and Lifestyle	121	30.3
Manufacturing	41	10.3
Health Care	22	5.5
Service	77	19.3
Total	400	100.0

Source: Researcher's Fieldwork (2024)

Gender

In terms of the gender of the respondents, the above table shows that majority of the respondents were female. This category of respondents accounted for 202(50.5%) of the total respondents while 198(49.5%) were males.

Age

On the age range distribution of the respondents, table 4.1 indicates that most of the respondents were between the ages of 26-30 years, this category of respondents accounts for 216(54.0%) of the total respondents, while 12(3.0%) were aged under 20 years, 104(26.0%) were aged 21-25 years, 50(12.5%) were aged 31-35 years and 18(4.5%) were aged 36 years and above.

Number of Employees

On the number of employees distribution of the SMEs, table 4.1 indicates that most of the SMEs have between 5-10 employees, this category of respondents accounts for 153(38.3%) of the total respondents, while 141(35.3%) have below 5 employees, 65(16.3%) have between 11-20 employees, and 41(10.3%) have between 21 and above employees.

Age of Business

On the age of business distribution of the SMEs, table 4.1 indicates that most of the SMEs were aged between 5-10years, this category of respondents accounts for 155(38.8%) of the total respondents, while 135(33.8%) were aged below 5years, 67(16.8%) were aged between 11-20years, and 43(10.8%) were aged 21 and above years.

Income (Monthly)

On the monthly income distribution of the SMEs, table 4.1 indicates that most of the SMEs were earning a monthly income of 100,001 to 200,000, this category of respondents accounts for 155(38.8%) of the total respondents, while 143(35.8%) were earning a monthly income of less

than 100,000, 59(14.8%) were earning a monthly income of 200,001 to 500,000, and 43(10.8%) were earning a monthly income of 500,001 and above.

Sector

On the sectoral distribution of the SMEs, 121(30.3%) indicates that most of the SMEs were in beauty and lifestyle sector, while 48(12.0%) were ICT sector, 68(17.0%) were in Agriculture sector, 23(5.8%) were in hospitality sector, 41(10.3%) were in manufacturing sector, 22(5.5%) were in health care sector, and 77(19.3%) were in service sector.

4.3 Descriptive Analysis of Digital Marketing and Growth of Small and Medium Scale Businesses in Nigeria

This section presents descriptive analysis on the data retrieved from respondents using frequency count, percentage (%) and mean.

4.3.1 Data Presentation and Analysis for the Independent Variable

The tables below presents the descriptive analysis on the independent variables (affiliate marketing, viral marketing, email marketing, online advertising, and social media marketing) using frequency count, percentage and mean

Table 4.3: Descriptive Analysis of Affiliate Marketing

S/N	STATEMENT	Total Responses	%Response					Descriptive Mean (x)
			SA 5 f/(%)	A 4 f/(%)	U 3 f/(%)	D 2 f/(%)	SD 1 f/(%)	
6	Using external partners to promote our products/services has positively impacted our SME's growth.	400 (100)	106 (26.5)	214 (53.5)	41 (10.3)	25 (6.3)	14 (3.5)	3.93
7	Collaborating with third-party marketers has increased our brand's visibility and customer reach.	400 (100)	132 (33.0)	195 (48.8)	38 (9.5)	20 (5.0)	15 (3.8)	4.02
8	The use of referral programs and partnerships has boosted our sales and revenue.	400 (100)	119 (29.8)	205 (51.2)	36 (9.0)	27 (6.8)	13 (3.3)	3.98
9	Leveraging external channels to drive traffic to our website has enhanced our online presence.	400 (100)	128 (32.0)	192 (48.0)	49 (12.3)	22 (5.5)	9 (2.3)	4.02
10	Engaging in cooperative marketing efforts has led to an increase in our customer base.	400 (100)	129 (32.3)	180 (45.0)	54 (13.5)	21 (5.3)	16 (4.0)	3.96
	Average		122.8 (30.7)	197.2 (49.3)	43.6 (10.9)	23 (5.8)	13.4 (3.4)	3.98

SPSS output, Version 20 – Field Survey (2024)

The average mean value of 3.98 out of a possible maximum of 5 in Table 4.3 above suggests that, in relation to affiliate marketing, majority of the respondents agreed to the following statements: using external partners to promote our products/services has positively impacted our SME's

growth (\bar{x} =3.93); Collaborating with third-party marketers has increased our brand's visibility and customer reach (\bar{x} =4.02); the use of referral programs and partnerships has boosted our sales and revenue (\bar{x} =3.98); leveraging external channels to drive traffic to our website has enhanced our online presence (\bar{x} =4.02); and engaging in cooperative marketing efforts has led to an increase in our customer base (\bar{x} =3.96). It also clearly demonstrates that a significant majority of respondents (80.0%), of which 30.7% expressed strong agreement and 49.3% stated agreement, on statements related to affiliate marketing as stated in Table 4.3 above. In comparison, 9.2% disagreed (strongly disagree + disagree) and 10.9% were undecided.

Table 4.4: Descriptive Analysis of Viral Marketing

S/N	STATEMENT	Total Responses	%Response					Descriptive Mean (x)
			SA 5 f/(%)	A 4 f/(%)	U 3 f/(%)	D 2 f/(%)	SD 1 f/(%)	
11	The use of creative and shareable content in our marketing strategies has positively impacted our business growth.	400 (100)	111 (27.8)	183 (45.8)	70 (17.5)	27 (6.8)	9 (2.3)	3.90
12	Customers often share our marketing content with their networks, leading to increased brand visibility and growth.	400 (100)	112 (28.0)	191 (47.8)	61 (15.3)	24 (6.0)	12 (3.0)	3.92
13	Our marketing campaigns have the potential to go viral and reach a wider audience, contributing to our SME's growth.	400 (100)	127 (31.8)	182 (45.5)	65 (16.3)	19 (4.8)	7 (1.8)	4.01

14	We frequently use influencer collaborations to promote our products/services, which has a positive effect on our business growth.	400 (100)	111 (27.8)	191 (47.8)	63 (15.8)	28 (7.0)	7 (1.8)	3.93
15	The buzz generated around our marketing campaigns has translated into increased sales and revenue for our SME.	400 (100)	117 (29.3)	172 (43.0)	69 (17.3)	31 (7.8)	11 (2.8)	3.88
	Average		115.6 (28.9)	183.8 (46.0)	65.6 (16.4)	25.8 (6.5)	9.2 (2.3)	3.93

SPSS output, Version 20 – Field Survey (2024)

The average mean value of 3.93 out of a possible maximum of 5 in Table 4.4 above suggests that, in relation to viral marketing, majority of the respondents agreed to the following statements: the use of creative and shareable content in our marketing strategies has positively impacted our business growth ($\bar{x}=3.90$), customers often share our marketing content with their networks, leading to increased brand visibility and growth ($\bar{x}=3.92$), our marketing campaigns have the potential to go viral and reach a wider audience, contributing to our SME's growth ($\bar{x}=4.01$), we frequently use influencer collaborations to promote our products/services, which has a positive effect on our business growth ($\bar{x}=3.93$); and the buzz generated around our marketing campaigns has translated into increased sales and revenue for our SME ($\bar{x}=3.88$). It also clearly demonstrates that a significant majority of respondents (74.9%), of which 28.9% expressed strong agreement and 46.0% stated agreement, on statements related to viral marketing as stated

in Table 4.4 above. In comparison, 8.8% disagreed (strongly disagree + disagree) and 16.4% were undecided.

Table 4.5: Descriptive Analysis of Email Marketing

S/N	STATEMENT	Total Responses	%Response					Descriptive Mean (x)
			SA 5 f/(%)	A 4 f/(%)	U 3 f/(%)	D 2 f/(%)	SD 1 f/(%)	
16	Using electronic mail to reach out to potential customers	400 (100)	111 (27.8)	191 (47.8)	57 (14.2)	30 (7.5)	11 (2.8)	3.90
17	Leveraging email campaigns for customer engagement and retention	400 (100)	112 (28.0)	195 (48.8)	60 (15.0)	21 (5.3)	12 (3.0)	3.94
18	Sending targeted promotional offers through digital correspondence	400 (100)	121 (30.3)	194 (48.5)	57 (14.2)	21 (5.3)	7 (1.8)	4.00
19	Utilizing email newsletters as a means to communicate with clients	400 (100)	112 (28.0)	189 (47.3)	58 (14.5)	25 (6.3)	16 (4.0)	3.89
20	Employing email automation tools to streamline marketing efforts	400 (100)	111 (27.8)	181 (45.3)	59 (14.8)	40 (10.0)	9 (2.3)	3.86
	Average		113.4 (28.4)	190 (47.5)	58.2 (14.6)	27.4 (6.9)	11 (2.8)	3.92

SPSS output, Version 20 – Field Survey (2024)

The average mean value of 3.92 out of a possible maximum of 5 in Table 4.5 above suggests that, in relation to email marketing, majority of the respondents agreed to the following statements: using electronic mail to reach out to potential customers (\bar{x} =3.90), leveraging email campaigns

for customer engagement and retention (\bar{x} =3.94), sending targeted promotional offers through digital correspondence (\bar{x} =4.00); utilizing email newsletters as a means to communicate with clients (\bar{x} =3.89); and employing email automation tools to streamline marketing efforts (\bar{x} =3.86). It also clearly demonstrates that a significant majority of respondents (75.9%), of which 28.4% expressed strong agreement and 47.5% stated agreement, on statements related to email marketing as stated in Table 4.5 above. In comparison, 9.7% disagreed (strongly disagree + disagree) and 14.6% were undecided.

Table 4.6: Descriptive Analysis of Online Advertising

S/N	STATEMENT	Total Responses	%Response					Descriptive Mean (x)
			SA 5 f/(%)	A 4 f/(%)	U 3 f/(%)	D 2 f/(%)	SD 1 f/(%)	
21	The use of digital platforms to promote our products/services has positively impacted our business growth.	400 (100)	111 (27.8)	194 (48.5)	54 (13.5)	32 (8.0)	9 (2.3)	3.92
22	Our online presence through various digital channels has improved our brand visibility among potential customers.	400 (100)	119 (29.8)	201 (50.2)	42 (10.5)	32 (8.0)	6 (1.5)	3.99
23	We have effectively utilized the internet to reach a wider audience and increase customer engagement.	400 (100)	124 (31.0)	194 (48.5)	44 (11.0)	28 (7.0)	10 (2.5)	3.99
24	Our investment in digital	400 (100)	112 (28.0)	209 (52.3)	46 (11.5)	22 (5.5)	11 (2.8)	3.97

	marketing activities has led to an increase in website traffic and online interactions.							
25	The utilization of social media and search engine marketing has contributed to an uptick in customer conversions.	400 (100)	117 (29.3)	192 (48.0)	55 (13.8)	27 (6.8)	9 (2.3)	3.95
	Average		116.6 (29.2)	198 (49.5)	48.2 (12.1)	28.2 (7.1)	9 (2.3)	3.96

SPSS output, Version 20 – Field Survey (2024)

The average mean value of 3.96 out of a possible maximum of 5 in Table 4.6 above suggests that, in relation to online advertising, majority of the respondents agreed to the following statements: the use of digital platforms to promote our products/services has positively impacted our business growth ($\bar{x}=3.92$), our online presence through various digital channels has improved our brand visibility among potential customers ($\bar{x}=3.99$), we have effectively utilized the internet to reach a wider audience and increase customer engagement ($\bar{x}=3.99$); our investment in digital marketing activities has led to an increase in website traffic and online interactions ($\bar{x}=3.97$) and the utilization of social media and search engine marketing has contributed to an uptick in customer conversions ($\bar{x}=3.95$). It also clearly demonstrates that a significant majority of respondents (78.7%), of which 29.2% expressed strong agreement and 49.5% stated agreement, on statements related to online advertising as stated in Table 4.6 above. In comparison, 9.4% disagreed (strongly disagree + disagree) and 12.1% were undecided.

Table 4.7: Descriptive Analysis of Social Media Marketing

S/N	STATEMENT	Total Responses	%Response					Descriptive
			SA 5 f/(%)	A 4 f/(%)	U 3 f/(%)	D 2 f/(%)	SD 1 f/(%)	Mean (x)
26	Our online presence on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram helps attract new customers.	400 (100)	137 (34.3)	189 (47.3)	39 (9.8)	22 (5.5)	13 (3.3)	4.04
27	Social media platforms play a significant role in increasing our brand's visibility.	400 (100)	126 (31.5)	185 (46.3)	47 (11.8)	30 (7.5)	12 (3.0)	3.96
28	We effectively engage with our target audience through our social media activities.	400 (100)	155 (38.8)	182 (45.5)	25 (6.3)	26 (6.5)	12 (3.0)	4.11
29	Social media has been instrumental in driving traffic to our website or online store.	400 (100)	129 (32.3)	197 (49.3)	43 (10.8)	18 (4.5)	13 (3.3)	4.03
30	We regularly use social media to promote our products or services.	400 (100)	128 (32.0)	197 (49.3)	49 (12.3)	14 (3.5)	12 (3.0)	4.04
	Average		135 (33.8)	190 (47.5)	40.6 (10.2)	22 (5.5)	12.4 (3.1)	4.03

SPSS output, Version 20 – Field Survey (2024)

The average mean value of 4.03 out of a possible maximum of 5 in Table 4.7 above suggests that, in relation to social media marketing, majority of the respondents agreed to the following

statements: our online presence on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram helps attract new customers ($\bar{x}=4.04$), social media platforms play a significant role in increasing our brand's visibility ($\bar{x}=3.96$), we effectively engage with our target audience through our social media activities ($\bar{x}=4.11$), social media has been instrumental in driving traffic to our website or online store ($\bar{x}=4.03$); and we regularly use social media to promote our products or services ($\bar{x}=4.04$). It also clearly demonstrates that a significant majority of respondents (81.3%), of which 33.8% expressed strong agreement and 47.5% stated agreement, on statements related to social media marketing as stated in Table 4.7 above. In comparison, 8.6% disagreed (strongly disagree + disagree) and 10.2% were undecided.

4.3.2 Data Presentation and Analysis for the Dependent Variable

The table below presents the descriptive analysis on the dependent variable (SMEs Growth) using frequency count, percentage and mean.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Analysis of SMEs Growth

S/N	STATEMENT	Total Responses	%Response					Descriptive
			SA 5 f/(%)	A 4 f/(%)	U 3 f/(%)	D 2 f/(%)	SD 1 f/(%)	Mean (\bar{x})
1	Digital marketing has positively impacted our revenue growth.	400 (100)	162 (40.5)	170 (42.5)	36 (9.0)	23 (5.8)	9 (2.3)	4.13
2	Our online presence has contributed to increased brand	400 (100)	143 (35.8)	196 (49.0)	38 (9.5)	16 (4.0)	7 (1.8)	4.13

	awareness.							
3	We have seen an improvement in customer engagement due to digital marketing efforts.	400 (100)	147 (36.8)	194 (48.5)	30 (7.5)	18 (4.5)	11 (2.8)	4.12
4	The use of digital marketing has led to an expansion of our customer base.	400 (100)	152 (38.0)	179 (44.8)	35 (8.8)	19 (4.8)	15 (3.8)	4.09
5	Digital marketing has resulted in higher conversion rates for our products/services.	400 (100)	146 (36.5)	194 (48.5)	35 (8.8)	20 (5.0)	5 (1.3)	4.14
	Average		150 (37.5)	186.6 (46.7)	34.8 (8.7)	19.2 (4.8)	9.4 (2.4)	4.12

SPSS output, Version 20 – Field Survey (2024)

The average mean value of 4.12 out of a possible maximum of 5 in Table 4.2 above suggests that, in relation to SMEs growth, majority of the respondents agreed to the following statements: digital marketing has positively impacted our revenue growth ($\bar{x}=4.13$), our online presence has contributed to increased brand awareness ($\bar{x}=4.13$), we have seen an improvement in customer engagement due to digital marketing efforts ($\bar{x}=4.12$), the use of digital marketing has led to an expansion of our customer base ($\bar{x}=4.09$); and digital marketing has resulted in higher conversion rates for our products/services ($\bar{x}=4.14$). It also clearly demonstrates that a significant majority of respondents (84.2%), of which 37.5% expressed strong agreement and 46.7% stated agreement, on statements related to SMEs growth as stated in Table 4.2 above. In comparison, 7.2% disagreed (strongly disagree + disagree) and 8.7% were undecided.

4.4 Correlation Analysis

The correlation results shed some light on the nature and direction of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables. Although the correlation coefficient does not imply functional dependence between the variables, it is a good starting point for investigating the degree and direction of the relationship between the variables. The findings are presented and discussed further below:

Table 4.8: Correlation Results

Correlations		SMEG	AFFM	VMKT	EMKT	OADV	SMKT
SME G	Pearson	1	.549**	.503**	.512**	.631**	.736**
	Correlation		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)		400	400	400	400	400
AFF M	Pearson	.549**	1	.638**	.594**	.595**	.545**
	Correlation	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	400		400	400	400	400
VMK T	Pearson	.503**	.638**	1	.726**	.624**	.561**
	Correlation	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	400	400		400	400	400
EMK T	Pearson	.512**	.594**	.726**	1	.730**	.605**
	Correlation	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	400	400	400		400	400
OAD V	Pearson	.631**	.595**	.624**	.730**	1	.719**
	Correlation						

	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	400	400	400	400	400	400
SMK	Pearson						
T	Correlation	.736**	.545**	.561**	.605**	.719**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	400	400	400	400	400	400

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Author's Estimation from SPSS 22, 2024.

As seen, affiliate marketing was positively correlated with SMEs growth ($r= 0.549$, $p=0.000$), implying that enhanced affiliate marketing was associated with higher SMEs growth, which is significant at 5%. There was also a positive correlation between SMEs growth and viral marketing ($r= 0.503$, $p=0.000$), implying that favourable viral marketing was associated with higher SMEs growth, and this relationship is also significant at 5%. SMEs growth was also positively correlated with email marketing ($r= 0.512$, $p=0.000$), implying that increased email marketing will enhance SMEs growth, which was statistically significant at 5%. Similarly, in the case of online advertising, a positive correlation with SMEs growth ($r=0.631$, $p=0.0000$) was observed, implying that increases in online advertising are associated with higher SMEs growth, which is significant at 5%. Finally, social media marketing was positively correlated with SMEs growth ($r= 0.736$, $p=0.000$), implying that enhanced price consciousness was associated with higher SMEs growth, which is significant at 5%

Furthermore, none of the variables have a coefficient value greater than 0.80, indicating the presence of a multicollinearity problem, which denotes a situation in which some of the

explanatory variables in a model are correlated, limiting and altering the efficiency of the regression results.

4.5 Regression Analysis and Test of Hypotheses

The research hypotheses were tested utilising regression analysis in order to achieve the current study's objectives. The hypotheses were evaluated with an Alpha level of significance of 0.05 (Decision rule: computed level of significance <0.05, reject null hypothesis; computed level of significance >0.05, accept null hypothesis).

H₀: Null Hypothesis

H_i: Alternative Hypothesis

Table 4.9a Model Summary of Digital Marketing and Growth of Small and Medium Scale Businesses in Nigeria

Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin - Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.763 ^a	.582	.577	.48083	.582	59.690	5	394	.000	2.138

a. Predictors: (Constant), AFFM, VMKT, EMKT, OADV, SMKT

b. Dependent Variable: SMEG

Source: Statistical Package for social Sciences v.22

The model summary result from the regression output is shown in the table above. The Rsquare measures how well the independent variables (affiliate marketing, viral marketing, email marketing, online advertising, and social media marketing) explain changes (variations) in the dependent variable (SMEs growth). The Rsquare value of .582 shows that the explanatory variables account for about 58.2% of the variance in the dependent variable. This is a relatively strong explanatory strength, implying that the model was deliberately and correctly formulated, and that the model's output may be relied on for policy formation. The Durbin Watson value indicates whether the model has an autocorrelation problem. According to its criterion, the value 2.138 is approximately equal to two (2), showing that the model has no autocorrelation problems. This suggests that the model's efficiency property is ensured.

Table 4.9b Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Digital Marketing and Growth of Small and Medium Scale Businesses in Nigeria

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	126.802	5	25.360	59.690	.000 ^b
	Residual	91.093	394	.231		
	Total	217.895	399			

a. Dependent Variable: SMEG

b. Predictors: (Constant), AFFM, VMKT, EMKT, OADV, SMKT

Source: Statistical Package for social Sciences v.22

The table above displays the analysis of variance (ANOVA) result on digital marketing and growth of small and medium scale businesses in Benin City, Edo State. The F statistics value of 59.690 is significant at 0.000 (5% significance level). As a result, the explanatory factors (affiliate marketing, viral marketing, email marketing, online advertising, and social media marketing) are significant drivers of the dependent variable (SMEs growth).

Table 4.9c Multiple Regression Output of Digital Marketing and Growth of Small and Medium Scale Businesses in Nigeria

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
	1 (Constant)	.904	.148				6.099	.000	.613
AFFM	.161	.043	.171	3.776	.000	.077	.245	.515	1.941
VMKT	.029	.049	.031	.593	.554	-.067	.125	.399	2.504
EMKT	-.056	.052	-.060	-1.085	.279	-.158	.046	.343	2.912
OADV	.161	.056	.163	2.890	.004	.051	.270	.334	2.993
SMKT	.507	.045	.544	11.233	.000	.418	.596	.452	2.214

a. Dependent Variable: SMEG

Source: Statistical Package for social Sciences v.22

Hypothesis One

H₀: In Benin City, Nigeria, there is no correlation between affiliate marketing and the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises. According to Table 4.9c's result above,

affiliate marketing and the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises in Benin City, Nigeria, are related. The p-value of.000 was less than 0.05, leading the researcher to infer that we fail to accept the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis (p.value =.000 < 0.05 & T-stat = 3.776> 2).

Hypothesis two

H₀: holds that there is no connection between the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises in Benin City, Nigeria, and viral marketing. The above Table 4.9c result demonstrated that there is no correlation between viral marketing and the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises in Benin City, Nigeria. Consequently, the researcher comes to the conclusion that since the p value of.554 was higher than 0.05 and the T-status was.593 less than 2, we should accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis

Hypothesis Three

H₀: holds that email marketing has no bearing on the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises in Benin City, Nigeria. The outcome from Table 4.9c above demonstrated that email marketing has little bearing on the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises in Benin City, Nigeria. Because the p value of.279 was greater than 0.05 and the T-status was - 1.085 < 2, the researcher concludes that we accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis.

Hypothesis Four

H₀: In Benin City, Nigeria, there is no correlation between the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises and online advertising. The conclusion from Table 4.9c above demonstrated that internet advertising and the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises in Benin City, Nigeria, are related. Because the p value of.004 was less than 0.05 (p.value =.004 < 0.05 & T-stat = 2.890 > 2), the researcher concludes that we fail to accept the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

Hypothesis five

H₀: holds that social media marketing has no bearing on the expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises in Benin City, Nigeria. According to Table 4.9c's finding above, social media marketing and the expansion of small and medium-sized businesses in Benin City, Nigeria, are related. Because the p value of.000 was less than 0.05 (p.value =.000 < 0.05 & T-stat = -11.233 > 2), the researcher concludes that we fail to accept the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

4.8 Discussion of Findings

Firstly, the study found that there is a relationship between affiliate marketing on the growth of small and medium-sized businesses in Benin City, Nigeria. Similarly, Kothari (2021) indicated a significant positive impact of affiliate marketing on SME performance, underscoring its effectiveness in enhancing visibility and sales. In contrast, Mwangi and Ojuok (2020) found that

while affiliate marketing had a visible impact on customer outreach, it did not significantly translate into business growth, primarily due to the low conversion rates and high competition.

Secondly, the study found that there is no relationship between viral marketing on the growth of small and medium-sized businesses in Benin City, Nigeria. Similarly, Okonkwo (2021) discovered a significant positive impact of viral marketing on SME performance. In contrast, a broader African study by Moyo and Swanepoel (2022) aligns with this study's findings, observing minimal influence of viral marketing strategies on SME growth, suggesting possible market saturation or ineffective implementation of viral strategies.

Thirdly, the regression analysis revealed that there is no relationship between email marketing on the growth of small and medium-sized businesses in Benin City, Nigeria. This aligns with Adebayo and Olukoya (2020), who observed minimal impact of digital marketing tools, including email marketing, on SME performance. However, this finding contrasts with Chukwuemeka et al. (2021), who reported a positive correlation between email marketing and SME growth.

Fourthly, the regression analysis revealed that there is a relationship between online advertising on the growth of small and medium-sized businesses in Benin City, Nigeria. Akinbode et al. (2021) do not affirm the lack of significant impact, highlighting that digital marketing does not always correlate with immediate business growth due to low digital literacy and limited Internet penetration among target audiences. In contrast, Olatokun and Kebonye (2020) found that online

advertising significantly boosts customer reach and profitability among SMEs, suggesting regional disparities in digital efficacy.

Finally, the result indicates that there is a relationship between social media marketing on the growth of small and medium-sized businesses in Benin City, Nigeria. While Ogunnaike, Borishade, and Jeje (2019) affirm the positive correlation between social media marketing and business growth, noting significant improvements in customer engagement and increased sales revenue. In contrast, Olaleye and Sanusi (2017) observed that the effectiveness of social media marketing varies significantly across different sectors, with technology-driven businesses gaining more than traditional retail.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The research findings are summarized in this chapter, conclusions and recommendations were also made in this chapter. The chapter is structured as outlined as follows; the summary of findings, the conclusion of the study, the recommendations of the study.

5.2 Summary of Findings

This study focused on Digital marketing and its growth in Benin city. The study targeted four hundred (400) respondents who were small medium enterprise owner in Benin City, of which same number of questionnaires were distributed with all completely retrieved and filled, yielding an impressive 100.0% response rate, ensuring the subsequent analyses are built on a substantial

foundation of respondent input. The findings arrived at after the empirical analysis is stated below:

1. From the results, it was discovered that there is a significant relationship between affiliate marketing on the growth of small and medium-sized businesses in Benin City, Nigeria.
2. Secondly, the analysis revealed that there is no relationship between viral marketing on the growth of small and medium-sized businesses in Benin City, Nigeria.
3. Thirdly, it was revealed that there is no relationship between email marketing on the growth of small and medium-sized businesses in Benin City, Nigeria.
4. Fourthly , the study revealed that there is a significant relationship between online advertising on the growth of small and medium-sized businesses in Benin City, Nigeria.
5. Fifthly, the analysis revealed there is a significant relationship between social media marketing on the growth of small and medium-sized businesses in Benin City, Nigeria.

5.3 Conclusion

The study focused on digital marketing and it's growth on micro businesses in Egor and Ovia North Local Government Area of Benin City, considering dimensions like affiliate marketing, social media marketing, email marketing, online advertising marketing, and viral marketing. It included 400 respondents chosen through random sampling and employed descriptive and inferential analyses. The findings suggested that while the five independent variables had

significance, there was no clear link to SME performance. Consequently, the study concluded that there was no direct relationship between digital marketing and SME growth in the specified areas.

5.4 Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study;

1. Firstly, considering the significant effect of viral marketing on the growth of small and medium-sized businesses, it is advisable for small and medium-sized businesses owner to Create shareable content that evokes emotions or provides value. Encourage user-generated content and participation. Utilize trending topics and current events to make their content more relevant.
2. Secondly , despite the finding that, there is no relationship between Email marketing on the growth of small and medium-sized businesses it should also Personalize their emails to increase engagement. Segment their email list based on user behavior for targeted campaigns. Use compelling subject lines to increase open rates. Optimize emails for mobile devices. Test different elements such as images, CTAs, and copy to optimize performance.
3. Thirdly, Although it was revealed that there is a relationship between affiliate marketing on the growth of small and medium-sized businesses, it is advisable to Choose affiliates that align with their brand and target audience. Provide affiliates with the necessary tools

and resources to promote your products effectively. Offer competitive commission rates to incentivize affiliates. Monitor and analyze affiliate performance to optimize campaigns. Establish clear communication channels with affiliates to foster a strong relationship.

4. Fourthly, Social Media Marketing should Engage with their audience by responding to comments and messages promptly. Use visual content like videos and images to increase engagement. Utilize social media analytics to track performance and adjust strategies accordingly. Collaborate with influencers to reach a wider audience Run targeted ad campaigns to reach specific demographics and increase conversions.
5. Fifthly, Online advertising marketing One key recommendation for online advertising marketing is to continuously monitor and analyze their advertising campaigns' performance metrics. By tracking key performance indicators (KPIs) such as click-through rates, conversion rates, cost per acquisition, and return on investment, you can identify what's working well and what needs improvement. This data-driven approach allows you to optimize their online advertising efforts, allocate budgets effectively, and maximize the impact of their campaigns.

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APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE EFFECT OF DIGITAL MARKETING ON GROWTH OF SMALL AND MEDIUM SCALE ENTREPRISES

Department of Marketing
Faculty of Management Sciences
University of Benin
Benin City, Edo State.

Dear Respondent,

APPEAL FOR THE COMPLETION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

I am an undergraduate student in the above named Department. As part of the requirement for the programme, I am conducting a research on “Digital Marketing and Growth of Small and Medium Scale Businesses in Nigeria”. In this regard, you have been randomly selected as a member of the sample. I also wish to assure you that your responses will be treated in strict confidence and used for the stated academic purpose only.

Thank you.

Yours Faithfully,

QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: PERSONAL DATA

Tick $\sqrt{\quad}$ in the appropriate box and give answers where necessary.

1. Gender: Male [] Female []
2. Age of SME owner: Under 20yrs [] 21 – 25yrs [] 26-30years [] 31-35years [] 36years and above []
3. Number of Employees: Below 5 [] 5-10 [] 11-20 [] 20 and above []
4. Age of Business: Below 5 [] 5-10 [] 11-20 [] 20 and above []
5. Income (Monthly): Less 100,000 [] 100,001-200,000 [] 200,001-500,000 [] 500,001 and above []
6. What is your Sector?
 - i. ICT []

- ii. Agriculture []
- iii. Hospitality []
- iv. Beauty and Lifestyle []
- v. Manufacturing []
- vi. Health Care []
- vii. Service []

SECTION B: GENERAL

Please tick in the appropriate box after each question as an indication of your choice using Likert scale: Strongly Agree=SA; A= Agree; Undecided=U; Disagree= D; Strongly Disagree= SD.

S/N	PARTICULARS					
	SMEs Growth	SD	D	U	A	SA
7	Digital marketing has positively impacted our revenue growth.					
8	Our online presence has contributed to increased brand awareness.					
9	We have seen an improvement in customer engagement due to digital marketing efforts.					
10	The use of digital marketing has led to an expansion of our customer base.					
11	Digital marketing has resulted in higher conversion rates for our products/services.					
	Affiliate Marketing	SD	D	U	A	SA
12	Using external partners to promote our products/services has positively impacted our SME's growth.					
13	Collaborating with third-party marketers has increased our brand's visibility and customer reach.					
14	The use of referral programs and partnerships has boosted our sales and revenue.					
15	Leveraging external channels to drive traffic to our website has enhanced our online presence.					
16	Engaging in cooperative marketing efforts has led to an increase in our customer base.					
	Viral Marketing	SD	D	U	A	SA
17	The use of creative and shareable content in our marketing strategies has positively impacted our business growth.					

18	Customers often share our marketing content with their networks, leading to increased brand visibility and growth.					
19	Our marketing campaigns have the potential to go viral and reach a wider audience, contributing to our SME's growth.					
20	We frequently use influencer collaborations to promote our products/services, which has a positive effect on our business growth.					
21	The buzz generated around our marketing campaigns has translated into increased sales and revenue for our SME.					
	Email Marketing	SD	D	U	A	SA
22	Using electronic mail to reach out to potential customers					
23	Leveraging email campaigns for customer engagement and retention					
24	Sending targeted promotional offers through digital correspondence					
25	Utilizing email newsletters as a means to communicate with clients					
26	Employing email automation tools to streamline marketing efforts					
	Online Advertising	SD	D	U	A	SA
27	The use of digital platforms to promote our products/services has positively impacted our business growth.					
28	Our online presence through various digital channels has improved our brand visibility among potential customers.					
29	We have effectively utilized the internet to reach a wider audience and increase customer engagement.					
30	Our investment in digital marketing activities has led to an increase in website traffic and online interactions.					
31	The utilization of social media and search engine marketing has contributed to an uptick in customer conversions.					
	Social Media Marketing	SD	D	U	A	SA
32	Our online presence on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram helps attract new customers.					
33	Social media platforms play a significant role in increasing our brand's visibility.					
34	We effectively engage with our target audience through our social media activities.					
35	Social media has been instrumental in driving traffic to our website or online store.					

36	We regularly use social media to promote our products or services.					
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Thank you for your participation

APPENDIX II

Frequency Table

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	202	50.5	50.5	50.5
	Female	198	49.5	49.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

AFFM1.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	14	3.5	3.5	3.5
	Disagree	25	6.3	6.3	9.8
	Neutral	41	10.3	10.3	20.0
	Agree	214	53.5	53.5	73.5
	Strongly Agree	106	26.5	26.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

AFFM2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	15	3.8	3.8	3.8
	Disagree	20	5.0	5.0	8.8
	Neutral	38	9.5	9.5	18.3
	Agree	195	48.8	48.8	67.0
	Strongly Agree	132	33.0	33.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

AFFM3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	13	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Disagree	27	6.8	6.8	10.0
	Neutral	36	9.0	9.0	19.0
	Agree	205	51.2	51.2	70.3
	Strongly Agree	119	29.8	29.8	100.0

Total	400	100.0	100.0	
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AFFM4

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	9	2.3	2.3	2.3
Disagree	22	5.5	5.5	7.8
Neutral	49	12.3	12.3	20.0
Agree	192	48.0	48.0	68.0
Strongly Agree	128	32.0	32.0	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

AFFM5

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	16	4.0	4.0	4.0
Disagree	21	5.3	5.3	9.3
Neutral	54	13.5	13.5	22.8
Agree	180	45.0	45.0	67.8
Strongly Agree	129	32.3	32.3	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

VMKT1

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	9	2.3	2.3	2.3

Disagree	27	6.8	6.8	9.0
Neutral	70	17.5	17.5	26.5
Agree	183	45.8	45.8	72.3
Strongly Agree	111	27.8	27.8	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

VMKT2

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	12	3.0	3.0	3.0
Disagree	24	6.0	6.0	9.0
Neutral	61	15.3	15.3	24.3
Agree	191	47.8	47.8	72.0
Strongly Agree	112	28.0	28.0	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

VMKT3

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	7	1.8	1.8	1.8
Disagree	19	4.8	4.8	6.5
Neutral	65	16.3	16.3	22.8
Agree	182	45.5	45.5	68.3
Strongly Agree	127	31.8	31.8	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

VMKT4

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	7	1.8	1.8	1.8
	Disagree	28	7.0	7.0	8.8
	Neutral	63	15.8	15.8	24.5
	Agree	191	47.8	47.8	72.3
	Strongly Agree	111	27.8	27.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

VMKT5

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	2.8	2.8	2.8
	Disagree	31	7.8	7.8	10.5
	Neutral	69	17.3	17.3	27.8
	Agree	172	43.0	43.0	70.8
	Strongly Agree	117	29.3	29.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

EMKT1

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	2.8	2.8	2.8
	Disagree	30	7.5	7.5	10.3
	Neutral	57	14.2	14.2	24.5
	Agree	191	47.8	47.8	72.3

Strongly Agree	111	27.8	27.8	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

EMKT2

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	12	3.0	3.0	3.0
Disagree	21	5.3	5.3	8.3
Neutral	60	15.0	15.0	23.3
Agree	195	48.8	48.8	72.0
Strongly Agree	112	28.0	28.0	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

EMKT3

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	7	1.8	1.8	1.8
Disagree	21	5.3	5.3	7.0
Neutral	57	14.2	14.2	21.3
Agree	194	48.5	48.5	69.8
Strongly Agree	121	30.3	30.3	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

EMKT4

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Valid	Strongly Disagree	16	4.0	4.0	4.0
	Disagree	25	6.3	6.3	10.3
	Neutral	58	14.5	14.5	24.8
	Agree	189	47.3	47.3	72.0
	Strongly Agree	112	28.0	28.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

EMKT5

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	9	2.3	2.3	2.3
	Disagree	40	10.0	10.0	12.3
	Neutral	59	14.8	14.8	27.0
	Agree	181	45.3	45.3	72.3
	Strongly Agree	111	27.8	27.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

OADV1

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	9	2.3	2.3	2.3
	Disagree	32	8.0	8.0	10.3
	Neutral	54	13.5	13.5	23.8
	Agree	194	48.5	48.5	72.3
	Strongly Agree	111	27.8	27.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

OADV2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	6	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Disagree	32	8.0	8.0	9.5
	Neutral	42	10.5	10.5	20.0
	Agree	201	50.2	50.2	70.3
	Strongly Agree	119	29.8	29.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

OADV3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	10	2.5	2.5	2.5
	Disagree	28	7.0	7.0	9.5
	Neutral	44	11.0	11.0	20.5
	Agree	194	48.5	48.5	69.0
	Strongly Agree	124	31.0	31.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

OADV4

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	11	2.8	2.8	2.8
	Disagree	22	5.5	5.5	8.3
	Neutral	46	11.5	11.5	19.8

Agree	209	52.3	52.3	72.0
Strongly Agree	112	28.0	28.0	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

OADV5

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	9	2.3	2.3	2.3
Disagree	27	6.8	6.8	9.0
Neutral	55	13.8	13.8	22.8
Agree	192	48.0	48.0	70.8
Strongly Agree	117	29.3	29.3	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

SMKT1

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	13	3.3	3.3	3.3
Disagree	22	5.5	5.5	8.8
Neutral	39	9.8	9.8	18.5
Agree	189	47.3	47.3	65.8
Strongly Agree	137	34.3	34.3	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

SMKT2

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative
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					Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	12	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Disagree	30	7.5	7.5	10.5
	Neutral	47	11.8	11.8	22.3
	Agree	185	46.3	46.3	68.5
	Strongly Agree	126	31.5	31.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

SMKT3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	12	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Disagree	26	6.5	6.5	9.5
	Neutral	25	6.3	6.3	15.8
	Agree	182	45.5	45.5	61.3
	Strongly Agree	155	38.8	38.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

SMKT4

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	13	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Disagree	18	4.5	4.5	7.8
	Neutral	43	10.8	10.8	18.5
	Agree	197	49.3	49.3	67.8
	Strongly Agree	129	32.3	32.3	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

SMKT5

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	12	3.0	3.0	3.0
	Disagree	14	3.5	3.5	6.5
	Neutral	49	12.3	12.3	18.8
	Agree	197	49.3	49.3	68.0
	Strongly Agree	128	32.0	32.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

SMEG1

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	9	2.3	2.3	2.3
	Disagree	23	5.8	5.8	8.0
	Neutral	36	9.0	9.0	17.0
	Agree	170	42.5	42.5	59.5
	Strongly Agree	162	40.5	40.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

SMEG2

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	7	1.8	1.8	1.8
	Disagree	16	4.0	4.0	5.8

Neutral	38	9.5	9.5	15.3
Agree	196	49.0	49.0	64.3
Strongly Agree	143	35.8	35.8	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

SMEG3

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	11	2.8	2.8	2.8
Disagree	18	4.5	4.5	7.2
Neutral	30	7.5	7.5	14.8
Agree	194	48.5	48.5	63.2
Strongly Agree	147	36.8	36.8	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

SMEG4

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	15	3.8	3.8	3.8
Disagree	19	4.8	4.8	8.5
Neutral	35	8.8	8.8	17.3
Agree	179	44.8	44.8	62.0
Strongly Agree	152	38.0	38.0	100.0
Total	400	100.0	100.0	

SMEG5

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	5	1.3	1.3	1.3
	Disagree	20	5.0	5.0	6.3
	Neutral	35	8.8	8.8	15.0
	Agree	194	48.5	48.5	63.5
	Strongly Agree	146	36.5	36.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	